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THE

# Annals of Jamaica.

BY

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VOLUME THE SECOND.

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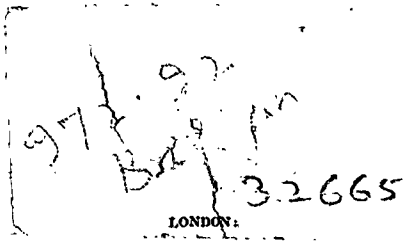


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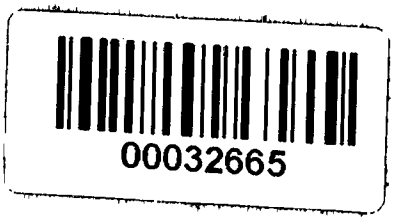

# PREFACE OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

In the long career of vice and vigour, of error and oppression, I have at length reached the term of my labours, and have completed my design of bringing down the Annals of Jamaica, from the first blush of that morning which dawned upon the long night of transatlantic oblivion, to the present evening of its decayed and feeble existence. The tedious task of *selecting from the dull mass of colonial records* has not been enlivened by any hope that the public favour will be extended to my work; for its subject is unpopular, and an enlightened age requires from the historian some tincture of philosophy and criticism. I cannot, therefore, expect that the narrative will possess any interest beyond the confined circle of those who still retain a share in the soil of Jamaica. Prejudice may, however, become enlightened by reason; and if a superficial glance should be bestowed by those whose ignorance has endangered the

existence of the colony, my time, however unprofitably to myself, has not been idly spent.

To the members of the local legislature I trust that my labours may be of use by lightening theirs: for, though the compass of the work would not permit the record of every fact which it may be desirable for them to be acquainted with, yet the arrangement of annals refers each leading event to its proper time and place; and their Journals, the principal sources of my information, lie open to them all.

The spirit of party, in a work like this, I most devoutly deprecate; and my own feelings of personal obligation have more than once been wounded in pursuing a narrative whose only merit may be that of impartiality, under all the difficulties of living characters and recent times. By those who knew him not, and by those alone, I may, perhaps, be suspected of sacrificing the faith of history to discharge an obligation of gratitude to a Nobleman to whom I am deeply indebted: but the historian who may be silent without danger, may praise without difficulty or reluctance; and posterity will readily confess that the prolonged government of the Duke of Manchester might furnish the subject of a sincere and ample panegyric.

In an accurate review of the laws, and political institutions, of the colony, I should have felt myself

culpably negligent, had not the defect been fully supplied by a much more able pen: and I may congratulate my readers, as well as myself, that I have not ventured to tread on ground which is so much better occupied by Mr. Howard, in his recent work on the Rights of Property in Jamaica.

The delusion of self-flattery prompts me to imagine that the reader may inquire, who it is that thus ventures to remove the veil which has so long obscured, and tarnished, one of the brightest jewels in the British Crown.

I am proud of my birth in a free country, whose varied pleasures the affectionate indulgence of the best of parents enabled me to enjoy during nearly thirty years of an eventful and happy life. Accident brought me, a stranger, to this distant land of *slavery; the obligations of a parent detained* me, necessity still keeps me, here: and the inherent duties of my profession suggested the idea of using the inoffensive arms of truth in a field which slander has long marked for its own. I confess that I had no intention of assuming the unassisted labour of five irksome years; nor did I expect to encounter such bitter foes as I have met with on my way. My total inexperience of West India politics, or prejudices, led me to believe that substantial truth might be safely and successfully opposed to bare assertion;

and, from a trifling pamphlet, I have still been led, by that fallacious hope, through the dull pages of two tedious volumes. Ignorance, perhaps, they still may help to conquer, by the aid of such intelligence as cannot err. The means of local information, with the facilities of a rare and chosen library, have been mine: and their fruit, which these pages bear, claims but the humble merit of a compilation, whose faults, or merits, are entirely my own. But for myself, I ask more; I claim an exemption from that persecution which follows across the ocean the conscientious defenders of these ruined colonies. The peculiarity of my situation here, with no local obligation but my profession, should preclude any suspicion of prejudice, or partiality; and, separated from the friends, the country, of my youth, it might conciliate even the most inveterate to learn, that they may still rejoice in the calamities of an irksome, and a hopeless exile.

SAINT ANN, JAMAICA,
March, 1828.

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# ANNALS OF JAMAICA.

## CHAPTER X.

CAUSES OF THE INFERIORITY OF THE SLAVES IN THE BRITISH COLONIES—CHARACTERISTIC APATHY, THE NATURAL EFFECT OF CLIMATE—CONFLAGRATION OF PORT ROYAL—GENERAL HUNTER'S GOVERNMENT—THE EUROPEAN TROOPS DEFEATED BY THE SLAVES—DISPUTES OF THE LEGISLATURE AND DECLINE OF THE COLONY—REINSTATEMENT OF AYSCOUGH—THE ELEVATION OF GREGORY—THE ACCESSION OF TRELAWNY, AND PEACE WITH THE REBELS.

[A.D. 1728—1739.]

THE *Annals of Jamaica* would continue to repeat only a tedious tale of increasing weakness, and each successive year would impose a more ungrateful and melancholy task, should I persevere in a minute accumulation of domestic incidents which break, by hasty transitions, the natural connexion of causes and events. One hundred years still separate me from the term of my labours, and a *general* history of the island, now established in its laws, its commerce, its agriculture, and its constitution, will form the subject of the present volume. That the affairs of a colony so new, so distant, so small, and so poor,

as Jamaica *is*, should indeed admit the lengthened annals of its mean estate, may excite the smile of an historian of the British empire. But our estimate of importance is relative only to the common prejudices of mankind; and the political situation of a country must be measured, like the lofty plains amidst the Alps and Andes, not so much by its real altitude, as with a reference to its base, or the elevation it has attained above the common level of what surrounds it. The stature which, amongst a people of giants, would pass unnoticed, appears conspicuous in a race of pigmies; and Jamaica, poor and humble as she is, still possesses that which a Tacitus would not neglect, nor a Gibbon disdain. But if the reader seek to become acquainted only with her form and features, the surface of the country, and not its spirit and constitution, let him close this book: for such I labour not. I have the highest authority for the assertion, that history, however written, must always be instructive; and it is a fact, equally capable of proof, that description, however lively, must generally fail.

When preparing for a far and foreign journey, it is no doubt a very natural desire to become acquainted with the route, the stages we are to make, the objects we are to behold; but should more particular information be required—should we desire to anticipate a knowledge of the country, to be familiar with its features, with the peculiarities of climate, or of the inhabitants, it is in vain to seek it even in the most glowing imagery of descriptive language. The

distance between sight and language is indeed immeasurable. The most active powers of verbose description cannot reach the length of one momentary glance. Images traced by the pen of the most lively writer seldom possess the merit even of correct design, much less are they embellished with vivacity of colouring: at best they are but pale, cold pictures; bearing, perhaps, a nebulous impression of their objects; but when those objects are surveyed, the portrait is no longer recognised.

The surprise evinced by every visiter of these Western Indies pays but a poor compliment to the powers of description which have been lavished on a thousand volumes.* In vain has he endeavoured to furnish his imagination with the views of tropical scenery, the peculiarities of climate, the varieties, the habits, or the manners of the inhabitants. The sketch his fancy had portrayed instantly escapes him, and its outline vanishes upon the first view. Nor is there any one feature in Jamaica so likely to exemplify this effect as the appearance of a population, generally described as sunk in the lowest state of degradation and misery, visibly enjoying a greater proportion of content, active protection, and positive happiness, than do their pallid, weary, and dejected masters. He beholds a race of men transplanted from

* Were any thing like an exception to be tendered to a fact which really admits of none, it might be offered, with a semblance of probability, in favor of the vivid pencil of Mr. Coleridge, the lively Author of *Six Weeks in the West Indies.*

their native soil, where slavery is a habit, liberty an accident, and where, indeed, they existed no better than the beasts of the woods and sandy deserts; under British laws, gradually rising in the scale of human intelligence, to that state which, in their own land, they could never have attained; and he may speculate, with the authority of Herodotus, upon what they may yet become.* That their regeneration is not, however, so rapid as the philanthropist would desire, cannot be denied; but a thousand causes, over which their masters have no controul, and which it is the duty of the historian to unfold, have impeded it: none perhaps more effectually than the peculiar pressure upon the agricultural productions of their expensive labour; and the consequent absence of proprietors whose estates are in the hands of their merchants.

But there are two other circumstances which concur in the continued depression of the negro character within the British Indies, and which must not be concealed;—the want of religious example by the white population; and the simple, unimposing nature of the forms of worship there.

I. Empty churches, the unhallowed burial of the dead in fields and gardens, the criminal delay of baptism;† the discouragement of marriage, and the profanation of the Sabbath, are models which the slaves can hardly be expected to improve. Fraught with

* See Note I. † See Note M.

pernicious consequences to the whole community, it is in vain that the clergy from eight-and-forty pulpits zealously denounce the wrath of heaven, and the loss of man, while none attend to hear them; for it cannot be expected that the heathen, or the neophyte, will approach an altar which seems despised, or neglected, by the presumed superiority, and high attainments, of his temporal master.

II. It cannot escape observation that, besides the fact of the slaves being in a state more approaching to civilization in colonies not so heavily oppressed by taxes as those under the British dominion, the arts and luxuries, which adorn or improve mankind, have made a much greater progress in the catholic, than in the protestant colonies of the West. All superfluous ornament is rejected by the cold frugality of the protestants; while the Roman superstition, although the religion of despotism, and the enemy to reason, *often becomes the parent of the arts*: and it may be easily imagined that even the splendid vices of the papal church would have introduced more ostensible improvements, perhaps made more converts to the abstract cause of Christianity in this island, than have the more pure, but less impressive, ceremonies of the reformed religion. Mankind is ever prone to embrace a splendid error rather than a sober truth: and the wealthy communities of priests and monks expend their revenues on stately edifices, splendid processions, impressive music,* and imposing exhibi-

* See Note III.

tions, well calculated to affect the senses, and to make a deep impression on the minds of the ignorant multitude; while, in every community, the refinement of society follows the real or ideal improvements of religion. Experience, indeed, has shown the efficacy of the most solemn and pompous rites to sooth the distress, to confirm the faith, to mitigate the fierceness, and to dispel the dark enthusiasm of the vulgar; and, in the conversion of the heathen, we may readily forgive their tendency to promote the reign of priesthood, or the terrors of superstition. But even without all this, when the poison of sectarians is thus diffused over our church, when its pillars are shaken by those who preserve the name, without the substance of religion, who indulge the license, without the temper of philosophy;—when we behold the infinite divisions of religious tenets which are encouraged in the British colonies, and their tendency to distract attention and divide opinion, where union is peculiarly necessary, it cannot appear extraordinary that the labours of the established clergy should produce but little effect, or that the Christianity of the nineteenth century, thus debased and mingled, should be found more difficult of digestion than that of the ninth.

During the first eighty years of British occupation, the religion of Jamaica was kept warm by the embers of fanaticism, which the conquering army* brought; while considerable advances were made in many of

* See Note IV.

the useful arts, and in some of the ornamental refinements of life. The colonists brought with them also the habits, the manners, and the morals of an age which, if it were less polished, was certainly less frivolous, perhaps even less puritanical, than the present: their energy was neither damped by restriction, their benevolence by adversity, nor their ardour by disappointment. The active inhabitants then excelled in the arts of navigation and trade, if not of agriculture; their arms were felt on the main, and their credit was established in every port of Europe. They had a country to form, a property to defend, and an undisputed share in enacting those laws, which it was their interest, as well as their duty, to maintain. By some, indeed, the prosperity of Jamaica was then viewed with the same spirit of indignation and envy, which are excited in the breast of a noble, by the luxury and independence of a wealthy merchant. And the attentive observer of her history will scarcely deny that Great Britain herself has, more than once, participated in such a feeling towards her offspring. Her political struggles were indeed, at first, vital and violent; but they ended, or were thought to have ended, an hundred years ago, in the settlement of a civil constitution, whose infringement was never contemplated, and whose model was never excelled.* That twilight of her early existence appeared as the morning of a beautiful day; and, in the most strict sense of the term, Jamaica might then have assumed

* See Note V.

the proud title of a Province* of the British empire. Mediocrity is, however, the best preservative of political, as well as moral virtue; and the misfortunes which elevate and brighten the energies of the mind are preferable to that excess of prosperity which enervates it; for, by opening the way to vice, it closes that to happiness. The bright days of prosperity soon, indeed, passed from Jamaica; misfortunes seemed to increase in proportion to the efforts which nature made to render her happy, and it is now too late for her to assert the prerogative of rank, when she scarcely dares to raise her voice under the heavy charge of having lost her claim to justice; and when the children of her wealth are ashamed to acknowledge their parent in the senate to which that wealth has raised them. To the indiscriminating eye of an ordinary observer Jamaica may, perhaps, still appear as rich and productive as in the days of George the second; the form truly is the same, but the animating health, and vigour, are fled. The industry of the people is discouraged, and exhausted, by a long continuance of oppressive taxes imposed in war and retained in peace; now an expiring taper. Those who know her real state, will hardly believe that she once shone pre-eminent amongst the proudest and the richest of colonies; a splendid beacon in the West guiding the industrious to affluence and honour:

——— clarum et venerabiles nomen,
Gentibus.

* See Note VI.

It is scarcely an hundred years since she glittered the brightest jewel in the brightest earthly crown: when, in her patriotic pride, she seemed almost to forget that she could be free and prosperous, only by a friendly connexion with Great Britain. The friends of liberty then rejoiced, that within the narrow limits of a transatlantic isle, a spectacle was exhibited as rare, as it is worthy of imitation: a people strenuously defending their liberties by means the most legitimate, who would neither sell themselves nor their posterity, but evinced unshaken firmness in the trying day of danger, and sober moderation in the triumphant hour of victory.

And had this patriotic excitement extended its influence to their domestic industry; had their energies kept pace with their zeal, the colonists would have fixed Jamaica in a rank much higher than she holds. But, unhappily, their activity has never, to this moment, approached the rich, unexplored treasures of their vast resources; and the feeble excuse of the earlier settlers, who pleaded their infancy in a land where the arts had never been cultivated, and the want of them little felt, cannot be available now, in their mature or declining age.

I have long delayed, and would willingly suppress, a trait in the Creole* character which may explain this apparent anomaly, one which has obstructed

* Criolles, or Creoles, was the name originally given by the Indians to the children of *Spaniards and natives*, born in the Indies.

those obvious improvements which the colonists of Jamaica have never wanted the ability to discern, yet never possessed the energy to execute. The sons and daughters of Jamaica are kind parents, cheerful companions, warm friends; their houses, nay, their purses, are ever open, though now, alas! almost empty,—they respect religion, and the laws,—are confiding, generous, and liberal; they have proved that they can brave death in the earthquake, or in the hurricane, as well as in the field, and that they fear nothing so much as infamy or disgrace. But the warmth of the torrid zone disposes everything that has life to the most intemperate enjoyment of tranquillity. It is difficult to ascertain, and it is easy to exaggerate the influence of climate; but the heavens and the earth are here certainly too prodigal in their luxurious gifts; both are alike armed against the active energies of man, who is the yielding slave to habit. An air loaded with almost tangible vapours, a cloudless sky, a blazing sun, an irresistible torrent of light, an unchanging temperature, and, above all, a land which exacts not the common vigilance of labour to pour forth, without any interval of repose, the richest luxuries of nature, all combine to unstring the nerves, paralyse exertion, and form the most unseemly feature in the pale children of the western sun. The body, throughout the year, is oppressed—the blood stagnates by excessive heat, and the spirits sink to a corresponding state of inactivity. An Englishman, born beneath a sky of varying temperature,

is continually sensible of new impressions, which keep his senses awake. He is vigilant, active, and inconstant, as the air he breathes. The West Indian, who is constantly exposed to the same intolerant temperature, to the same oppressed sensations, is listless, languid, and dejected. In colder regions, inaction is a punishment; beneath the tropic, repose is an enjoyment; marks of an universal lethargy prevail, indolence is the vice of the climate; and the inhabitants have imbibed the vices, without imitating the arts and institutions of European society.

Otherwise where are all the manufactories which this island is so capable of supplying, and for the want of which it still pays so indiscreetly, and so dearly? How are the rich, and spontaneous, and innumerable productions of its native forests improved or treated?* Why has not encouragement been offered to the starving mechanics of Great Britain,—a refuge given to the groaning paupers with whom England is surcharged,—or an asylum afforded to the hopeless despondency of the desperate Irish, amidst the many thousand acres which, in the interior of Jamaica, still remain, rich in their wasted luxuriance, the haunt of rebels, or the den of thieves? land which offers the blessings of British laws, and to such objects of despairing misery, would be indeed a self-productive Eden. Why has not a population of free labourers been thus encouraged to supply the place of those who are now vanishing in the thin, cold cloud of

* See Note VII.

party politics, the victims to the artful hypocrisy of an extravagant, or experimental age? Let the event of the popular and passing experiment of emancipation be what it may, such a measure would obviate its worst possible effects: it would long since have removed all apprehension of a servile war, and saved a world of treasure, and of life.

Too truly may be applied to Jamaica the trite proverb, *Quos Deus vult perdere, &c.*, and many an example offers the prospect of what must be the effect of her own moral imbecility. If, in the obscurity of the dark ages, we abandon the sweeping hordes of brigands, who, in desolating the earth, trampled upon the small communities which arrogate the name of empires; and, if we except the mighty terror of the Roman name, which could subdue nations by the simple summons of its heralds, we shall find that no country, possessed of any resources, has ever fallen beneath the mere efforts of an external enemy; not a colony, firmly established, was ever subverted by the event of a single battle. Greece, subdued by the Roman power, Rome herself annihilated by the northern hordes, fell, as Jamaica will fall, less by the effect of foreign force, than of interior decay, and imbecility. This is one of the few facts which have been so satisfactorily elucidated in the history of the rise and fall of empires, that an examination of the habits and customs of such countries as have preserved no traditions might lead to an exposition of their history. Their manners would be to them what the

Parian marbles were to the Grecians; a monument, indeed, still more valuable, imposing only the easy task of decyphering characters so deeply traced as to be indelible. The *moral* of each nation might thus be substituted for its antique inscriptions; and we should there read the revolutions which ages have long since swept away; while the strength of manners and the influence of climate would be both exemplified and explained.

Of Jamaica, however, it is easier to deplore the fate than to describe the present condition; to attempt which we must return to the year 1728. The spirit of commerce, and improvement, has ever been that of liberty, it can flourish indeed only beneath the shadow of salutary laws; no event could therefore have been better calculated to draw forth her resources than the permanent establishment of a free constitution, which terminated the long and disastrous struggle. The equivocal demonstrations of the Spanish monarch, who, although he spoke the language of peace and friendship, aspired to be the sole master of the Western World, had reduced the colonial trade within limits strait and hazardous; and such an arrangement was rendered desirable for Jamaica, at a much greater sacrifice than that by which she had obtained it. The rebellious spirit of the slaves was unsubdued; with bloody hands, savage manners, and desperate resolutions, they had adopted an offensive warfare; the treasures of the island were nearly exhausted, the administration of

A.D. 1728.

justice had been long suspended, and the attention of all classes was called, and for a time devoted, to the improvement of its internal condition, and, especially, to the effective establishment of its forts and fortifications. Incessant vigilance was also required in the discovery, the attack, and the pursuit, of the numerous rebel detachments; but the success was various, for the active spirit of the slaves often triumphed over the indolent assurance of their opponents.

The infant settlement of Port Antonio, the scene of the most obstinate contest, received more than its share of attention and security; and martial law was enforced, until the peace, which was ratified with Spain, enabled the planters to turn their thoughts exclusively to those agricultural resources which had suffered so severely in the struggle. The strength of the colony could calculate on seven thousand six hundred white inhabitants, eight hundred and fifty free negroes, and seventy-four thousand slaves, whom a season of peace might have applied to great advantage. But the depredations committed by the Spaniards were unabated; and the passive forbearance of the English court was cowardly and contemptible. The people of the West Indies complained of their repeated losses, clothing their representations in the strongest language of remonstrance, and of truth; while the powerful opponents of a mean spirited ministry improved the facts so far as to excite that universal spirit of detestation against the perfidious enemy, which eventually ended in the

war they had long desired. The ill-fated town of Port Royal had once more, like a phœnix in the ocean, raised an aspiring head from a bed of smoking ashes, and again it fell a sacrifice to a conflagration. Like a volcano it burnt for three days, and the flames were stopped only by the waves which encompassed its black and seething walls. The scene of luxury and riot was changed into a desert; and the prospect of the smoking ruins was almost the only distinction between the solitude of nature, and the desolation of man. The misfortune was limited to few of the inhabitants, for few survived it; but many hundreds of their mercantile dependents, throughout the island, were plunged in misery and ruin. To improve the general consternation, it was suspected that incendiaries had been employed, and that the event was connected with the repeated failure in every attempt to suppress the rebel negroes, who now assumed a still more active and formidable appearance. Inflammatory placards were discovered on the walls and tavern doors, and the slaves were publicly instigated to union and insurrection. Though often checked, and sometimes defeated, they successfully occupied the mountain passes, and prevailed in their own extraordinary mode of warfare. A force despatched against them was conquered, or corrupted, at the moment when their principal settlement was within its grasp; faction and discontent were the natural consequences of repeated defeat, and the mild and amiable governor was incessantly tormented

with sorrows he could not assuage, and demands which it was impossible to satisfy.

The British government was not inattentive to the situation of Jamaica; and two regiments, withdrawn from the garrison of Gibraltar, proved its vigilance and regard. Nor was Jamaica deficient in tokens of substantial gratitude; a considerable addition to their pay was drained from her exhausted coffers, and two independent companies were raised and equipped, to attend and assist them in their arduous duties. But, unfortunately, the inhabitants possessed valour without conduct, and the love of independence without the spirit of union. A scandalous faction prevailed in the councils of the colony; the irritation of public distress was kept alive by the inevitable calamities of domestic discord, and the little influence possessed by the gentle Hunter, proved, what has since often been experienced, that the governor of Jamaica ought to unite the qualities of ability and rank, to preserve the community from the disorders of democracy. His conspicuous merit had broke through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the situation he held, and he had been selected for this appointment as a man possessing a perfect knowledge of the respective interests of the continental and insular colonies of Great Britain. He had governed in New York and Virginia; and in all his employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself by the prudence and integrity of his conduct; but a military governor has never been successful in Jamaica,

and such an administration has always been marked by popular tumult and endless faction. General Hunter had proved himself the firm supporter of the protestants, who were suspected of having many enemies here; and the disquietude of the island was, in some measure, attributed to the intrigues of concealed papists. He therefore exerted his influence to procure an edict compelling all residents, from the age of sixteen to sixty, to abjure the Roman faith; and he succeeded, after a warm debate, in which it was fairly urged, that the law would easily be evaded by those who could so readily obtain a dispensation for the moral crime of perjury.

Apprised of the hostile preparations of the Spanish court, he laid an embargo upon the shipping; and though he acted only agreeably to his instructions, the unavoidable injury which the measure inflicted on the liberty of trade, raised him a multitude of noisy enemies. But his active genius was still employed for the benefit of the island; and he laid before the king a proposal to establish six independent regiments for its exclusive protection,—a measure the more necessary, as the rebellious slaves had fortified their town in the mountains, and erected a standard of revolt, to which the negroes were daily flocking, supplied with arms and ammunition by the emissaries of France and Spain. In his judicious memorial, he painted, in lively colours, the exhausted state of the treasury, the desolation of the country, the disgrace of the militia, and the insolent triumph of the rapacious

barbarians. His investigations proved that the
A.D. 1731. commercial distress was chiefly owing to the loss of Campeachy and Honduras, which had been seized by Spain; and to the transfer of the French and Dutch colonial trade to the more fortunate settlers in New England. The intrigues of the South-Sea Company were also mischievous and imposing; while the vast supply of sugar which was poured into Ireland, and all the foreign markets, anticipated the Jamaica planters, whose industry was ill-paid by the growth of cocoa, the export of which was prohibited by duties, or by the scanty produce of the coffee tree,* which had been but lately introduced.

Such was the general distress, and so ruinous was the expenditure upon the unsuccessful attempts to suppress the rebellion, that, to replenish the exhausted treasury, and supply the exigencies of the public service, a loan was solicited at the unusual interest of twelve per cent.; while the attention of the legislature was distracted by the variety and importance of the subjects which demanded its active interference. The Governor spoke the language of conciliation, and of truth: in a studied speech, conceived and delivered with dignity, he represented the various dangers which threatened, and the discords which disgraced the colony; and after explaining, in the

* The Arabs call the coffee-berry *boun;* the liquor made from it, *cahoué*—thence the word coffee. The powerful efficacy of the beverage, as a tonic, is expressed in the latter native word, which signifies *strength.*

clearest manner, the intricate causes of the decay of trade, he strongly urged the necessity of union, without which the island would be inevitably lost.

The troops under De Lameliere were again defeated by the savages whom they affected to despise: a base slave, who had betrayed them, excited the groundless suspicion that the treason would prove the first spark of a general conflagration; and dissatisfaction, or despair, urged the Assembly to threaten a discontinuance of the military pay. A calmer judgment, however, offered tempting rewards for the destruction of the banditti; freedom to the slave, gold to the soldier, who should capture, or convey the head of a rebel; while to the families of such as fell in the service, ample provision was assured. Admiral Stewart seconded these active measures, and the cannon or the courage of the seamen effected far more than the train-band discipline of a military parade. The Admiral's instructions created some alarm amongst the commercial speculators, who petitioned him to suspend the execution of that part of his orders which related to his capture of the Spanish traders, as it too nearly affected their own equivocal views. The recovery of two hundred and twenty thousand pieces of eight, from the wreck of a Spanish ship of war, discovered on the Pedro shoals, was, however, some compensation for the restrictions on an unfair trade; and the remonstrances of the British Government at length prevailed with the court of Spain, to issue orders for the discontinuance of those

savage acts of retaliation which kept the Indies in continual alarm. But the Kingston merchants, who were the chief aggressors, obtained not the protection they thus insidiously sought; for, continuing to carry on the illicit traffic, they were effectually excluded from protection. Yet not even this provocation could justify the barbarities committed by the *guarda costas*, the inhumanity of whose crews was at that time exemplified in the memorable instance of the unfortunate Jenkins.* It is but justice to the Spanish monarch, however, to record a circumstance, which proves that he was in earnest in the measure he adopted to suppress the outrages committed by his subjects. Upon the complaint of Admiral Stewart, one of his viceroys was sent to Europe in chains, and another was confined in the dungeons of the castle of Saint Jago de Cuba.

Amongst the civil regulations, proposed for the benefit of Jamaica, was one of considerable importance, but of no result; the appointment of a Master of the Rolls to conduct the Chancery, with an appeal to the governor and his council. It was also again proposed to introduce a white population, and to encourage it by grants of land; but the discussion was distracted by the influence of faction, and the Assembly required a period of adjournment, to be fixed by its members, who, in grand committee, dared to bar the door against a message from the crown. For the first offence, the governor was advised indis-

* See Note XXXIX. Vol. i.

creetly to prorogue it; for the second, he was obliged to accept, with humble inexperience, the strong and simple plea of parliamentary usage. Had not the most blind infatuation prevailed against the experiment of a white agricultural population, the opportunity would not then have been lost: the king's permission, granted to his troops, to disband, and settle themselves with their arms and stores, would have been accepted and improved; and the colony would have acquired that stability which it soon found the want of, during a contest which even then threatened it. But the inhabitants indulged a vain confidence which deferred the remedy of the approaching evil, without deferring the evil itself: the enjoyment of present repose was preferred to the active preparations for future security; a partial check given to the rebels again calmed their fears; and the only act of vigilance was the erection, or appropriation, of a few defensible houses to check the menace of a general revolt. The troops, harassed and dispirited, confined their efforts to a repetition of the same system of action which had so often failed against those who pursued no system whatever; while perfidious ambuscades continually thinned their ranks, and increased those of their enemies. In one instance the premature eagerness of the slaves, who were secretly posted in a deep ravine, through which the troops were passing, betrayed the ambuscade; and they would have been the victims of their own treachery, if the British regulars had known how to take advantage of the country. But the rapid dis-

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appearance of the barbarians foiled the manœuvres of their pursuers; the tide of rebellion rolled on with fearful fury, and the colony trembled on the edge of a precipice, when it was awakened from a slumber, which had nearly proved its last, by the tardy discovery that cowardice or corruption had again destroyed every prospect of success. It is almost certain that there had been a treasonable correspondence with the enemy, an invitation to advance, or an indulgence of retreat; it is quite certain that Colonel Ashworthy was convicted of gross negligence (a mild judgment), and that the rebels were endowed with fresh courage and renewed strength. The incapacity of a distracted government may, however, often assume the appearance, and produce the effect of treason; and the frequent divisions in the councils of the island did not tend to inspire the slaves with any great apprehension of the efforts used to suppress them. Extreme distress, which unites the virtue of a well-regulated government, embitters the factions of a weak one; and the sterile discussion of the right to appropriate the island funds put an end to all deliberation in the senate. The formal maintenance of invaded privileges provoked the assembly to rashness: an arrogant adherence to a principle, which it possessed neither the right to claim, nor the power to enforce, urged the council to obstinacy; the shouts of a common enemy at their doors were drowned in the tumult; and the only alternative was to dismiss them both, like children deprived of the toy they each had cried for.

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Thus were the public exigencies again left unprovided for, at a moment pregnant with alarm and danger; and then was first seriously felt the want of a free channel of communication with the mother country, through which the difficulties of the colony might find a ready access to the royal ear. The other colonies already maintained such an agent, and Jamaica, awakened at length by the dangers which surrounded her, followed the example; but not until the inroads of the victorious rebels, the desertion of the slaves to join their standard, and the failure of every attempt to intimidate them, had compelled many per-

A.D. 1734. sons who were not confined by the chains of either wealth, or poverty, to abandon the island. The fertile powers of the soil tended to overshadow its surface with thick woods, and the mischievous growth of inferior vegetation, which displayed the unassisted efforts of nature, was unchecked by cultivation. Storms and inundations were frequent and destructive; and many districts of the island relapsed to their native state of forest and morass, which here spread to a boundless extent whenever man ceases to exercise his dominion over the earth; while the portion which was maintained in a state of productive husbandry bore no comparison with the vast tracts abandoned to the wild growth of nature, or to the occupation of a wilder enemy. The continued restraint of martial law was also injurious to the planter; the common current of justice was arrested, and the rights of individuals

trampled on, oftentimes with impunity; for every military government floats between the extremes of absolute monarchy and wild democracy. Still, however, the annual exports from Jamaica to Great Britain, under all these disadvantages, amounted to the value of five hundred and forty thousand pounds.

Dark and discouraging as the prospect was, the gloom was deepened by the death of General Hunter. The humble tomb which covered his remains was consecrated by the respect and regret of all ranks, who beheld, with dismay, the reinstatement of Ayscough, the peccant president; a man who had already proved himself destitute of every resource which could engage the esteem, reward the service, or secure the obedience of the indignant colonists. His knowledge, if he possessed any, could only serve to confirm his habits by prejudices; he was unable to disguise to himself that he had deserved the contempt of every man of sense and virtue; and he returned to the government amidst the deep and silent curses of a trembling people. His enemies exposed him, therefore, with pleasure to the dangers and difficulties of a turbulent administration; and the first acclamations of his few adherents soon degenerated into the loud murmurs of dismay and discontent. The burden of martial law was not relieved by the consolations of confidence; and had not Sir Chaloner Ogle guarded the coasts with a seaman's vigilance, and a timely reinforcement of six hundred men arrived from Gibraltar, the inhabitants

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would not much longer have disputed the possession of the island with the Spanish depredators, President Ayscough, and the rebel slaves.

An unusual measure of success, which attended one of the parties sent against the negroes, in some degree obliterated the memory of the former disgrace, and revived expiring hope: but it was quickly extinguished by the prospect of an immediate war with France and Spain; and by the frightful declaration that the treasury could no longer support the payments which had been voted to the protecting regiments. A strong party, under Colonel Charlton, was defeated and pursued from the vale of Bagnal Thicket, where an hundred and fifty white men were cut off and destroyed; and the victorious shouts of the barbarians were heard almost in Spanish Town. Captain Pope's men were also surprised, and their quarters burnt; while the resources of the colony were rapidly declining, beneath the mad influence of the wildest of speculations. The South-Sea Company, by depriving Jamaica of the sale of slaves to the Spaniards, deprived her also of her seamen, and of the annual disposal of British manufactures, to the amount of more than six hundred thousand pounds; while the log-wood trade, which had employed a hundred sail of shipping in the ports of Jamaica, was now farmed to two or three private merchants, whose agents resided at Campeachy, and had there aided the Spaniards, more than once, in their treacherous attacks on the vessels trading to the two bays. Still, however, the

privateers trusted themselves to a dangerous sea, or on an enemy's coast, under the guidance of men who were pressed into the service, and whose skill and fidelity were therefore equally suspicious. But the hopes of plunder banished every idea of danger, and a natural fearlessness of disposition supplied the more rational confidence which is the just result of knowledge and experience. The clandestine traffic in French sugar was also increasing under the negligent or corrupt government of Ayscough, and the rich merchants of Hispaniola eagerly anticipated the ruin of their rivals in Jamaica.

But the administration of Ayscough drew towards its close; and the haughty president, who had long seen the symptoms of certain disgrace, now felt those of approaching death; yet he lived long enough to sow the seeds of the factious attempt to remove the seat of government, and to entail that additional curse upon his country. His health, however, was blighted, and disappointed ambition did not invigorate a constitution broken by intemperance, and sinking under the anxiety of guilt. The whole period of his administration had been one uninterrupted scene of confusion and disaster; his daily usurpations interrupted the course of justice; he was extinguished under the weight of public contempt; and the country charitably cast a decent veil over acts which ought, perhaps, to have been exposed to view and detestation.

John Gregory was the next in presidency, and he

succeeded to the vacant chair of the executive; resigning it only for a few weeks to the governor, Henry Cunningham, who soon fell by an act of his own intemperance at a public entertainment. Cunningham was a Scotch member of parliament, a man of honour and courage, but totally unqualified, either by experience or ability, for such a charge as the government of Jamaica. He owed his appointment to the partiality of Sir Robert Walpole, whose life he had saved from the fury of a London mob, when the obnoxious excise bill was pending in parliament. During his short, but turbulent administration, he was charged with being the weak tool of his patron, in the unpopular attempt to allay the spirit of resentment against the Spanish court, to which the minister was politically attached. Upon his death, Sir Orlando Bridgeman was nominated to the government, but he never quitted England; and in the confusion of these several changes the House of Assembly died a natural death. In that which succeeded it, the supineness of the inhabitants, who formed a militia of three thousand men, and an independent company of eight hundred, but who still tamely viewed the progress of the rebels, was severely censured by the president, who proposed that two hundred of the Chicksaw Indians should be employed in the defence of those who knew not how to defend themselves. But the interminable disputes between the council and the assembly prevented the execution of every useful project, or the improvement

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of any advantage; taxes could, with extreme difficulty, be raised to meet the ordinary exigencies of the government; and the staple productions of the island found so scanty a sale in Great Britain, the only mart allowed for them, that any further accession of strength, or expenditure of money, was utterly despaired of. But the judicious suggestions of President Gregory might have relieved the colony, had they been heeded. The "improba Siren, Desidia," prevailed, however, over the suggestions of prudence; and Jamaica languished and declined, for want of that remedy which it has so often been in her power to apply. "It is a matter of surprise," observed the president, "that in a country which abounds with all manner of stock, far beyond the proportion of the people, and is so capable of subsisting within itself, we should depend so much upon markets abroad, and lay out such sums in salted provisions, which we find so prejudicial to the people. Our first care should be to provide for our security by a sufficient number of white inhabitants. The way to do that is by making this a good poor man's country; by giving all proper encouragement; by suppressing all negro tradesmen and boatmen; by setting up some manufactories of cotton, and by cultivating coffee by the labour of white people only. If these measures were persisted in, there would be a comfortable provision for some thousands; and we should soon see a different face of affairs; a numerous and flourishing people."*

* Journals of Assembly, vol. iii. page 402.

The inevitable calamities of human life may, with propriety, be forgotten in the enjoyment of the fleeting hour; but the culpable inactivity of those who feel an evil, and yet neglect the remedy, finds no excuse. The Assembly promised, as usual, to attend to the salutary advice it received, but went no further; and the only sign of life was the erection of small barracks near the head of the Rio Bueno, and at the Little Moneague, in the parish of St. Ann. The alarm of a foreign enemy seems, indeed, to have usually excited greater apprehensions, and led to more effectual preparations, than the appearance of a domestic and dangerous foe; and the threatened attack of the Spanish fleet upon the distant province of Georgia actually drew attention from the daily barbarities of the unconquerable slaves at home. The deliberations of the colonial senate were commenced in alarm, continued in inactivity, and terminated in haste; intemperance or languor marked their weary progress; eight times had they been opened within the short space of two years, and, on the last, they were condemned by the address of a new governor.

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The clamour against Spain became so outrageous, that the British minister, foreseeing that by art, or influence, he could not much longer withstand the voice of the nation, found himself under the necessity of appointing to the government of Jamaica some man of character and resolution, who might assist him in his political projects; and the choice fell upon

Edward Trelawney, one whose active genius was equally suited to the enlarged views and minute details of civil policy. He immediately entered on his arduous duties with a determination to fulfil them; and first to put an end to a species of war which had been so successfully protracted by the rebel slaves, that they already marked the island for their own. Economy and industry, he considered as the pure and genuine sources of independence, and from them he soon derived a supply for the public exigencies. He discouraged the piratical acts of the Kingston adventurers, and set a laudable example of frugality, by reducing the expenses of his own household one half.

Eight years had now elapsed since Cudjoe, the enterprising leader of the rebel band, had united almost all the fugitive slaves under his wandering flag, and obtained for them the terrific appellation of Maroons. Though often met, and sometimes defeated, his disciplined opponents could never venture to occupy the ground which they had won; for ambush and surprise were the tactics of his savage war. To him the intricacies of an almost Alpine country were familiar, while they presented impenetrable fastnesses against an inexperienced army, abounding moreover in those wild provisions which might enable him to endure a siege. In the spirit of the negro character, his men desolated the country when excited by their wants, and lived in sloth when those wants were well supplied. They took up arms with savage fierceness,

and laid them down, or sometimes turned them against each other, with wild inconstancy. The defenceless fell instant victims to their thirst for blood; and, like the beasts which ranged their native wilds, when once tasted, nothing could stay the streaming knife. No chief amongst them ever had the power to stop the hand of his meanest follower, and no captive was ever saved to tell the dismal tale of his captivity. Though they had been repeatedly beaten, they were far from being dispirited; they still kept possession of their woods and caves, and every means employed to drive them out, had failed. Their depredations, which had exhausted the treasures and wearied the patience of the enduring planters, were repeated with undiminished cruelty; and to have attempted their reduction at such a moment of distress and depression, while the Spaniards were supplying them with arms and ammunition, would have been dangerous and ineffectual. Trelawney rather laboured to restrain, by mild authority, the prevailing schisms in his own councils: he introduced a spirit of moderation there, and then he adopted the most decisive and well-concerted measures to alarm the fears of the rebels; at the same time prudently opening a way to submission and to peace.

To manners the most conciliating this estimable man united a reputation without blemish. He quickly possessed himself of the confidence of all parties, and united the discordant factions which so long had torn the island. He interested himself in all their affairs,

heard all their complaints, deplored their misfortunes, reminded them of their duty, and left them no hope but in their own example and exertion. He exposed to all the secret of their own resources, and the weakness of those councils which so long had governed and misled them. A war with Spain appearing inevitable, his first care was therefore to put the island in a proper state of defence, and to secure its internal strength. Engineers were sent from England to survey the fortifications and to superintend their repair; the troops and the militia were put under the command of experienced officers, and at that period the militia constituted the better force. The colonists, who had so long suffered with patience, were at length prepared to act with vigour: Captain Sadler headed a strong party well armed, sought, and met the rebels in their haunts; showed them unequivocal proofs of his strength, received signs of submission, exchanged hats with their chief in token of fidelity, and negotiated a peace to the satisfaction of all parties. The negroes were weary of their way of life, implored the forgiveness and protection of the governor, and solemnly promised, as subjects in peace, or as soldiers in war, the most inviolable fidelity to the country which should receive them into its bosom. The offer was eagerly accepted, and a competent portion of land, in three separate districts of the island, was immediately allotted to them. The submission of Cudjoe was quickly followed by that of Quao, and of the rebels in the parish of Saint George;

and then it was first discovered that the force which had so long kept the island in alarm, and held in check the choicest troops of one of the greatest nations upon earth, did not exceed five hundred men. But such were the natural fortifications and resources, of which they were the masters, that the events of this contest were probably as singular and distressing, as any in which a British force had ever been engaged.

A.D. 1739.

## Chapter XI.

Undecided Conduct of the British Cabinet with respect to the Spanish Empire in the West.—Expeditions under Vernon and Wentworth.—Causes of their Failure.—Port Royal destroyed by an Hurricane.—Condition of the Slaves.—Departure of Trelawney—His Conduct and Character.—Accession of Admiral Knowles.—Examination of the Claims of the Colonists by the British Parliament.

[A.D. 1739—1754.]

Jamaica had been long exposed to a desultory species of warfare, by that weak and temporising policy which left the courts of England and Spain, *lento collisa duello:* and when hostilities seemed at length inevitable, the same narrow policy suggested the deceitful measure of issuing a secret order to make reprisals, before the declaration was made. A frigate bore the cheering intelligence to Port Royal; and numberless privateers were immediately equipped there; while Commodore Brown ventured boldly, with five sail of the line, to the Havanna; where, however, the spiritless orders of the British minister permitted him to exchange only a few ineffective shot. Still was the slumbering majesty of the empire daily insulted in its flag; the table of the House of Commons was loaded with petitions against the Spanish depredators; and an extraordinary bill was agitated, empowering the King to grant commissions, or charters, to any

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persons, or companies, for capturing "any ships, harbours, lands, or fortifications of the Spaniards in America: and for holding, and enjoying the same, as their own property and estate, for ever." Had such a measure received effect, it would have facilitated the ensuing war; for the Jamaica merchants were ready to exert themselves to the utmost against a detested enemy, who would have been unprepared to resist them. But the opportunity was lost; and the nation was obliged to look to its fleet alone for the redress which justice had so loudly sought. The Spaniards derided its indolence, they soon bewailed its activity.

A declaration had been made by the Court of Spain, reserving to his Catholic Majesty the right of suspending the Assiento, should the South-Sea Company refuse to pay sixty-eight thousand pounds, due on the balance of the duties; and upon this declaration, a convention was concluded between Sir Benjamin Keene, the British minister, and Sebastian la Quadra, on behalf of the other contracting party, which had for its object the regulation of the limits of Florida and Carolina, and the reparation of damages to the amount of ninety-five thousand pounds. The citizens of London and the West India merchants petitioned against the convention; the South-Sea Company refused to pay the demand, and the treaty, of which these measures were to form the basis, was never commenced. Yet the influence of Sir Robert Walpole would still have silenced the

clamour which demanded immediate war, had not the Court of Spain foolishly imagined that the political divisions by which the kingdom was distracted, were such that the king would never venture upon foreign hostilities. Under this impression it blindly baffled all the conciliating measures of the pacific minister, who would have deferred the actual declaration of hostilities, had the Spanish Monarch deigned even to save appearances, by seeming willing to afford that satisfaction which the voice of the British nation demanded. But this he disdained: and Sir Robert Walpole, whose pacific intentions were seconded only by the voices of a few servile and venal followers, was utterly deprived of an excuse to delay the war.

The monarch who declines to be the judge, teaches his subjects to consider him the accomplice of his ministers. It was the opinion of the nation that war should be avoided as long as it was possible to preserve a secure and honourable peace; but it was likewise its opinion that peace cannot be honourable or secure if the sovereign betrays a pusillanimous aversion to war. The command of the cabinet, and of the kingdom, had long been exercised by Walpole, and his abilities were equal to his station; but, in his intercourse with the Court of Madrid, he acted with a *forbearance*, which offended the nation, and gave some colour to the charge, that he was the enemy of England and the friend of the Spanish Monarch. Means were, however, at length found to convince the king

that it was absolutely necessary to vindicate the honour of his crown, and to adopt the most vigorous measures against an enemy who knew not the value of peace, and possessed not the abilities to prosecute a war; an enemy who tenaciously, yet vainly, stuck to the faint and falling relics of his western glory. Spain might have profited better by her own history; for, by a singular fatality, she was herself the Mexico and Peru of the old world. The discovery of the rich western continent by the Phœnicians, and the oppression of the simple Gallicians, who were compelled to labour in their own mines for the benefit of strangers, might have occurred to her as an exact type of her own America.

At this period the navy of Great Britain was numerous and formidable: nor did it want able officers to revenge the insults offered to its flag; but they were chiefly under the influence of a powerful minister, who had long and firmly held them in subjection. The vigorous prosecution of a war he detested, would, they knew, be disagreeable to him; and the difficulty, therefore, was to find one naval commander who was uninfluenced by favour, or unfettered by engagement. Such a man offered himself, however, in Captain Vernon, who had constantly opposed the favourite of the crown, and had more than once been heard to avow, with a sailor's frankness, his contempt of his person and his politics. He was, at the same time, well acquainted with the western seas, and had declared that, with six ships,

he would hoist the British flag upon the walls of Porto Bello. That declaration was now called to mind: he received a summons to the Court of St. James, and the command of a powerful armament against the Spanish Indies. Nor did Sir Robert Walpole dare to oppose the appointment of one whose courage and abilities as a seaman were unquestionable: but he impatiently awaited the failure of a measure which would convince the nation of the folly of a war with Spain.

Vernon was created Vice-Admiral of the Blue; and his flag spread terror as it swept the Atlantic to the appointed rendezvous at Port Royal. The appearance of his fleet soon changed the aspect of affairs there; the fortresses on the main no longer appeared impregnable or remote: aspiring fancy already covered Cuba with the troops, and the sea with the navy of England; while Jamaica gathered a rich harvest from the trade, and treasure, which vivified her shores. Crowds of adventurers, of desperate fortunes, embraced a doubtful profession on the ocean, and increased the strength of the island. Their daring spirit braved the perils both of sea and land; their skill was confirmed by the habits of enterprise; the meanest of the mariners was alike capable of handling an oar, of spreading a sail, or of conducting a vessel; and they rejoiced in the appearance of an hurricane which concealed their designs, and dispersed their enemies. After they had acquired an accurate knowledge of the maritime cities of the Spaniards,

they extended the scene of their depredations; and the most sequestered places had no reason to presume on their security. Their vessels drew so little water that they could easily proceed eighty, or an hundred miles up the rivers, and surprise an enemy before their approach was suspected. The Governor sanctioned their attacks by letters of marque, and their captures soon rewarded the dangers of the service.

Vernon was not unmindful of his engagement to take Porto Bello; and, retaining six chosen ships, he dispatched the rest of his fleet on various cruises: but the most scrupulous honour of a British sailor could not be compromised by the offer of two hundred and fifty men, whom Governor Trelawney raised in Jamaica, and put on board his ship; some of them the sons of the first families in the island. The Admiral was confined in his operations by no orders, and might securely choose amongst the Spanish towns the first object of his attack: his only instruction was to harass the Spaniards in their ports, or, if possible, to capture their plate fleet; but he weighed his anchor for an immediate attack upon the devoted city.

The Spaniards deemed that place impregnable; but the assault of British seamen was not to be resisted: at least not by Spaniards. The Iron Castle tamely surrendered; Gloria Castle made a show of resistance, but was opened by the sword of Vernon, and then capitulated; and the flag of England waved over the blood-stained battlements of St.

Nov. 21st.

Jeronimo, amidst the shouts of the victors, and the groans of the dying; for though the Spaniards were not slow in displaying the white flag, it was some time before the clouds of smoke dispersed, and the firing could be stopped. One hundred and fifty barrels of powder were scarcely sufficient to blow up the stupendous ramparts; and Jamaica was amply rewarded for the active part she had taken in the expedition, by finding a trade thus opened to the very heart of the Spanish dominions. A few suffered by the hand of the enemy, more from the noxious climate; for the bodies of the dead lying around, quickly putrefied, and spread disease throughout the forces. The people of England were delighted by the first achievement of the popular war; and the voice of fear, or folly, was instantly silenced by the shouts of victory. But while England reaped the laurels, the cypress was gathered in Jamaica, for she had lost some of her bravest sons. Although Sir Robert Walpole was silenced, and perhaps chagrined, the Duke of Newcastle acknowledged that the pledge had been fairly redeemed; he congratulated the victor, and publicly announced the intention of government to support his enterprise with six additional regiments of marines. The great object of Vernon's ambition was the conquest of Carthagena: but a powerful armament, under Lord Cathcart, was preparing; and it was, therefore, deemed more prudent to attempt nothing until his arrival in Jamaica should enable the joint commanders to associate the

Governor in their councils, and decide upon the plan of future operations. Vernon, however, could not be idle,—he refitted his ships, appeared suddenly off Carthagena, and bombarded it with courage, and effect. He could do no more against a town defended as it was, than set his mark upon the places proper for a future assault; and he withdrew. Captain Knowles, afterwards the Governor of Jamaica, was left to reduce and to command Fort Lorenzo, on the Chagre; and he gallantly fulfilled his orders, rewarding his intrepid followers with a vast and various spoil.

This influx of treasure was some compensation to the inhabitants of Jamaica for the ruinous interference of the South Sea speculations, which in England carried everything before them. The outwitted company had, in fact, been the cause of all the mischief; and eventually of its own destruction: for its loud complaints to the Spanish Court of an illicit traffic carried on in Jamaica, induced the guarda costas to commit those atrocities which gave rise to a war which ruined it. When, however, it became known that the French squadron had actually sailed to assist the Spaniards in the conveyance of their treasure, and when the Court of Versailles had openly declared that a British armament should never be permitted to make conquests in the West Indies, the plan of operation was materially altered; and it was resolved to increase Lord Cathcart's strength so as to be equal to the capture of all the French and Spanish

settlements in America. The provision of a force adequate to the extraordinary attempt, caused such an immediate scarcity of seamen, that in Jamaica their wages rose to the extravagant price of twenty guineas per month, and the privateers were compelled to lie inactive at Port Royal, while many a ton of gold and silver floated past them, secure only in the want of hands to take them.

Governor Trelawney and his colonists were not, however, inactive; nor were they successful. The Indian inhabitants of the neighbourhood of La Vera Paz, on the borders of Honduras, to the amount of nearly thirty thousand men, had failed, for want of arms, in the bold attempt to free themselves from the hated yoke of Spain. The Mosquito Indians were always ready for any enterprise against the Spaniards; and Trelawney thought that he could not do better than send five hundred stand of arms, and some Jamaica volunteers under an able Lieutenant, to organise and command their efforts. A Spanish settlement upon the Carpenter's river was surprised, and a considerable spoil was found there; but the Indians could not be tempted to go further from their country, and the adventurers were compelled to return to Jamaica, with the disgrace of having only prepared the enemy for a future attack.

Although the occupation of arms took the lead in Jamaica, the planters were not idle in the improvement of their estates, and the increase of their wealth. The population amounted to more than ten thousand

whites, and nearly an hundred thousand slaves: and the more secure or gentle portion of the community was amused, or scandalised, by the circumstances of a case a little out of the ordinary course of their domestic doings. The only printing press at that time in the island was actively employed in the amusing detail of a divorce bill through its several stages in the senate. The guilt of all the parties was notorious and shameless; for though a philosopher may pity and forgive the infirmities of female nature, contemptible must be the man who feels, and yet endures, the infamy of his wife. We may indeed be inclined to credit the assertion of a lady,* who declares that the husband will always be deceived, when the wife condescends to dissemble; yet it appears that, in this instance, amorous weakness connived at the criminal intercourse, or accepted a very slight assurance of innocence; seeking an appellation which may not drop from the pen of any decent historian. The credulity of love might, indeed, have been fairly punished by a dismissal of the tardy application: or the novelty of the appeal might have justified a pause before a power was exercised by the legislature, which at best was doubtful. But the investigation was amusing, the privilege was tempting, and the divorce was ruled. Mrs. Manning, a beautiful female, a matron in rank, a prostitute in manners, and who never shared the passion she inspired, was overwhelmed with shame; and Mr. Beckford was

* Madame Dacier.

expelled from the polluted benches of the senate. The judgment was never disturbed, but it can never be repeated: nor has its repetition ever been required; for though these are not the days of chivalry or romance, when "all the men were brave, and all the women chaste," and notwithstanding that the latter virtue is rather more difficult to acquire, or preserve, in these latitudes, than the former, yet may it be peculiarly ascribed to the daughters of Jamaica, whose conjugal faith is unimpeached.

A more important grievance was redressed by the judgment of the Governor; who waited not to be told that the principles of a free constitution are irrevocably lost, when the legislative power is, in any degree, subservient to the executive. For a considerable time the whole power of judicature in the Supreme Court of Assize had been exercised by four members of the council: leaving not a sufficient number at that Board to constitute a Court of Error. The accumulated causes left undecided, formed therefore a very serious impediment to the administration of justice; and though the Governor could allow no infringement of the royal prerogative by relinquishing the nomination of the judges, he instantly removed the obstruction, by the suspension of two members of his council, and by the appointment of others; while he referred the case, for permanent redress, to the British Government. A very material reform was also attempted in the Assembly: no less than that "all persons, thereafter to be elected, should be

disqualified, if they should make any application for votes." But it was much too stern an interdiction for even the uncorrupted legislators of that day.

The necessary preparations for the defence of the island from the combined fleets of France and Spain had drained the treasury, and increased the demand upon it, so much, that a public loan was sought, and procured, at the interest of ten per cent., from the overflowing chests of the wealthy Beckford: but at the same time the rate of interest was lowered to eight per cent. Fortifications were immediately constructed at Savanna la Mar, and on other exposed points: but the natural strength of Port Royal was so little to be depended on, that Kingston harbour became the chief object of solicitude; and the extended lines on Mosquito Point, now Fort Augusta, were projected by the skill and experience of Captain Knowles.

Vernon had sailed to meet the English fleet, which he imagined was approaching under Sir Chaloner Ogle: but he soon discovered that it was still detained by adverse winds, and that the Ferrol squadron, under De Torres, had proceeded from Porto Rico to Carthagena. This was an unforeseen obstacle to the meditated attack upon that city: but Vernon was joined by Gooch, with the forces he had raised in America, and upon his return to Port Royal, he found that the Brest and Toulon fleets, under the Marquis d'Antin, had embarked eleven hundred men at Martinique, and were cruising to windward of

Jamaica: a disposition which excited the utmost consternation, and left no room to doubt that an immediate attack was meditated. Still the privateers, protected by the British squadron, hovered over the Spanish trade; and the treasures which they acquired alone kept the island in a state of solvency. But the promised addition to the armament was far from compensating the delay of that support which Vernon impatiently required. The month of October expired before it even left the Channel: and the season was so unfavourable, that it was not difficult to foretell a fate which had already reduced D'Antin's hostile squadron to its last resources. The land forces consisted of disciplined detachments intended to be incorporated with the raw American battalions: and six regiments of marines, each a thousand strong, were provided with everything which foresight could suggest, or money procure.

No declaration of war having yet passed between the Courts of England and France, Vernon still prudently maintained a friendly correspondence with the several Governors of that power; and thence he gained the important information which he was anxious to obtain. But Lord Cathcart was the bearer of a proclamation which soon put an end to this amicable intercourse; it was calculated to shake the Spanish dominion in America to its foundations: and he was instructed to disperse it as he went. It promised indemnity and protection to all who should submit to the British crown, as if they had been born

its subjects; and offered a dispensation from all the taxes and oppression of the Spanish Monarch. It declared that "the Indians, especially, should be exempted from the royal tributes and services, to which they were subject; should have the right of trading direct to Great Britain and to all her colonies; and, in fine, upon all occasions, and in all respects, be considered, assisted, favoured, and treated as the natives of Great Britain." This manifesto drew from France, as might be expected, a strong remonstrance, accusing the Court of London of a breach of faith, by making any attempt upon the Spanish Indians contrary to the stipulations at the peace of Utrecht.

The fleet of Sir Chaloner Ogle consisted of no less than one hundred and seventy vessels, and Lord Cathcart had every reason to anticipate success. He reached one of the Windward Islands, but he was there expected by the angel of death, and the command fell upon General Wentworth; an officer without experience, a man without abilities; who possessed nothing in common with the Admiral, but his invincible obstinacy; and as great a contempt for the naval, as the other avowed for the military service. Off the shores of Jamaica four sail of the squadron, under Lord Augustus Fitzroy, fell in with an equal French force. The night was dark and tempestuous, and an engagement ensued; there were no means by which the combatants could recognise each other, save the flashes of the continuous broadsides

which scarcely pierced the clouds of smoke that hid their respective flags, and the battle raged with unremitted fury until the break of day showed each their fatal error. After exchanging mutual compliments, and condolences on the destructive event, they withdrew on friendly terms.

A council of war had been summoned at Port Royal, in which the indefatigable Governor bore a prominent part. He offered a strong body of negroes, which had been furnished by the zeal of the colonists, and which was added to a force already consisting of fifteen thousand seamen, and twelve thousand land forces: an armament more formidable than had ever floated upon the western seas. It was thought unnecessary to attack the French fleet, which was lying at Port Louis, reduced by famine and disease to so low a state, that of twenty ships not five could venture out to sea. Nor were the Spaniards in much better condition. But Vernon's national hatred of the French overruled the council: with a fleet of thirty sail of the line he sailed in search of the unfortunate D'Antin; and his rage knew no bounds when he discovered that he had escaped him, by returning with the wretched remnant of his force to France. The meditated attack on a city which would afford a display of all his courage, and all his hatred, assuaged, however, his vexation; and the mighty armament appeared in the Playa Grande, to windward of Carthagena. But ample preparations had

1741. Jan. 10th.

there been made for the defence of the town. Four thousand well disciplined troops under De Torres, and Don Blas de Leso, rendered its inhabitants bold, and its walls impregnable. Four line-of-battle ships, mounting not less than four hundred cannon, behind a bar, and under the guns of the tremendous Boca Chica, were flanked by redoubts, castles, and batteries, which forbade all approach; while on board the British squadron there reigned a spirit of discord more formidable than all. Irritated by the escape of the French fleet, the temper of the Admiral became impatient and overbearing; he dictated to, rather than consulted with, the members of his council; and though his experience in some degree might justify his obstinacy, his manners rather tended to disgust than to conciliate. On the other hand, Wentworth, as commander of the land forces, asserted his right to direct the movements; while the Admiral treated his ignorance of the service with such contempt, that wounded pride decided him even in his most dubious positions. Vernon, in short, was impatient of an equal, and Wentworth was ignorant of a superior. Hitherto they had confined their animosity to the cabin, but each had now an opportunity to gratify his resentment at the expense of his credit and his country.

British bravery still, under every disadvantage, proved irresistible. Incredible difficulties presented themselves, but they were surmounted. Nothing

in war was ever seen more desperate than the exertion of the British troops in this enterprise. The formidable Boca Chica and the Castello Grande were stormed and taken. The British Admiral meditated, by a skilful operation, to surprise the Spaniards in their impregnable citadel; and, improving his advantage in the field, either to intercept their communication with the country, or, perhaps, to enter the gates by a *coup de main.* But the errors and obstinacy of the general frustrated this important object, and were fatal to the expedition. The strong defences of Fort de St. Lazare offered a successful resistance to the divided councils of its assailants. Twelve hundred men boldly rushed to the assault; but when they arrived at the foot of the ramparts they found that no scaling ladders had been provided, and under a rolling fire of musketry they met their inevitable fate. Their bodies formed a mound, on which as many more ascended, and fell. Alone and unsupported, Colonel Grant, one of Jamaica's boldest sons, gained a footing, but he was quickly hurled from the crowded battlements, and the increasing light of the morning enabled the Spaniards to effect the total destruction of his intrepid followers, whose error was irretrievable, and whose valour was useless. Expecting no mercy, they received, with manly firmness, the death they would probably have inflicted, accusing with their latest breath the want of skill and caution in their general. A disorderly retreat, and the abandon-

ment of the enterprise, was the only alternative to save this mighty armament from destruction.

The ill-will of the Admiral, and the unskilfulness of the General, alike contributed to the defeat; for they sacrificed, with reckless rancour, the public safety to their private quarrels. The caution of the former precluded the usual investigations; and he enjoyed, with a malicious pleasure, the blunders of his rival's inexperience, who was too proud to take advice, and too confident to seek support. But the misfortunes of the expedition did not cease with the retreat from Carthagena. The calamities of war were suspended by those of pestilence: the infectious diseases, contracted in a noxious climate, accompanied the troops to Jamaica, and there destroyed multitudes of the peaceful inhabitants; while the disgrace of so signal a defeat, was embittered by the loss of many who could ill be spared. The colonists were not, however, *without hopes; but applied themselves*, with unwearied diligence, to render another attempt more successful. They abstained from their agricultural pursuits, to lend assistance to the army;—food, and even the choicest delicacies of the table, were furnished by individual subscription for the relief of the sick, or wounded; while their scrupulous morality, which hesitated not to rob a Spaniard, or to sack a city, took alarm at an attempt of the governor to relieve the extraordinary distress, and to supply the exigencies of the public purse, by the grant of a licensed lottery. The Assembly was scandalised at

a measure which, soon after, it adopted of its own accord, desired him to withdraw his license *, and the obliging Trelawney instantly complied. The penal slave code was then examined and revised; the duties of the magistrate defined, his powers increased; and measures taken to frustrate a daring conspiracy, which had been discovered amongst the slaves.

While Vernon was refitting his ships at Port Royal, Don Rodrigo de Torres was lying with a powerful squadron, at the Havanna; and Roqueville, with a French fleet, was cruising off the shores of Hispaniola. Neither of them, however, showed any disposition to act offensively, although they possessed a force superior to the British Admiral. His instructions left him at liberty, in concert with the Governor of Jamaica, to attack any of the Spanish territories: and he was promised an additional force of two thousand fresh soldiers, to render his success more certain. The ambitious Governor proposed to take the city of Panama; but Vernon, Ogle, Wentworth, and Guise, opposed the hazardous attempt; and it was resolved to attack St. Jago de Cuba, a town of little less importance, as there the intercourse between the Spanish and French islands might be effectually cut off.

With all his amiable qualifications, the merit of Governor Trelawney was rather useful, than brilliant:

* Laws of Jamaica, 17th Geo. II., cap. 7—10, which Act was made perpetual.

his virtues were sullied by avarice. Panamà offered a participation of treasure, which the most wealthy still might covet, and his opposition to the proposal of the commanders was influenced by the unworthy apprehension that a settlement upon the Island of Cuba might reduce the value or importance of his own inferior government. But herein he widely differed from his subjects, who ardently desired the reduction of St. Jago, a city which afforded the prospect of a rich spoil, and an easy conquest; and they eagerly contributed a force of five thousand slaves to recruit an armament reduced from twelve thousand men, to less than four. El Guantanamo, or Walthenham haven, afforded a safe and capacious anchorage; and on that occasion received the name of Cumberland Harbour, in honour of a royal duke. There a vessel was captured, the crew of which fled to the shore; where a seaman, observing the body of a Spaniard rolled up in an English ensign, brought away the flag, concealed in the folds of which he discovered a packet of letters detailing the secret orders of the French commander.

July 18th.

The enemy was driven from the advanced posts; and had the skill of Vernon been seconded by the discipline, or the valour of the troops, his success would have satisfied the sanguine expectations of those who required at his hands the exemplary punishment of the perfidious Spaniards. But of all the passions, or appetites, which disorder the mind of man, the love of power is the most imperious,

and the most unsocial; for the pride of one requires the submission of many; and the ardour of contention; the pride of superiority; the despair of success; the memory of past injuries; and the fear of future dangers; contributed to inflame the minds of the two British commanders to such a degree that the result of this expedition was even more disastrous than the fatal attempt upon Carthagena.

The Admiral had made an excellent disposition of his fleet, to prevent any surprise by De Torres, and was incessantly urging the General to put his troops in motion. Wentworth replied to these admonitions by informing him that he deemed the attempt impracticable, and that, therefore, he would proceed no further. The message was received by his troops in silence,—by the fleet with fury. Cowardice and treachery were words of more meaning than discretion: but Wentworth discovered that the officer who forfeits the esteem, will never command the obedience, of his soldiers. The brave Vernon, invincible on his own element, was thus vanquished by the delay, the disobedience, or the cowardice, of his military succours. The people of Saint Jago never, indeed, entertained any apprehensions of the result; they possessed magazines plentifully stored; fountains of the purest water ensured an abundant supply in case of siege; and their walls were manned by the choicest troops of Spain; while their enemies were exposed to the inclemency of a sickly season, the contagion of disease, and the

Aug. 5th.

horrors of famine. Upon their return to Jamaica, they counted a loss of two hundred of their best officers, and more than half their men, without striking a blow; while the muster-rolls showed a deficiency of nearly twenty thousand men, who, unable to endure the tropical heat, had dissolved away in languor and disease, since the fatal expedition had first sailed for Carthagena.

Notwithstanding this enormous national loss, the people of Jamaica were considerable gainers, not only by the presence of the troops, but also by the prizes which daily poured their treasures on their shores. The Governor reported that the population had increased to 14,000 whites, and 100,000 slaves; the militia to 5000, and the maroons to 250. But of the two regiments disbanded and dispersed ten years previous, not a trace remained. Port Royal rose once more from its ruins, and revelled in blood and luxury. The thirst for gold promoted the success of every private expedition; and the inhabitants burned with impatience to achieve the easy and lucrative conquest of Panama, a city which possessed all that could attract, and little that could resist, a British force.

Three thousand men, and a formidable squadron, arrived, bearing a letter from the Duke of Newcastle, reprobating, in the strongest terms, the dissensions which had arisen, and frustrated all the hopes of England in the west. A council of war was convened: some degree of har-

A. D. 1742. Jan. 15th.

mony was established; the plans of various operations were proposed, discussed, and rejected; till, at length, all agreed that Panama was the object against which their united efforts should immediately be bent. The Governor was delighted at the prospect of accomplishing his favourite scheme and at the head of a chosen regiment, whose ranks were filled with the flower of the Jamaica youth, he embarked as a Colonel and a volunteer. If the two commanders had really been reconciled by their common interest, and had advanced without delay, the golden city must have fallen: but it was impossible that success could attend the projects of two such implacable enemies, who neither desired, nor could trust, a reconciliation. Some precautionary measures were neglected or forgotten; others were ineffectual and defeated. Vernon was protected by his popularity, by a scrupulous adherence to the words of his instructions, and by a strict observance of the rules of his profession; while Wentworth sheltered himself behind the opinion of his Council, where a military majority could always be secured: and where his friends could save his reputation only at the expense of Vernon and of truth.

Experience has often shown that the success of an invader most commonly depends on the vigour and celerity of his operations. The strength and sharpness of the first impression are blunted by delay: the health and spirit of the troops insensibly lan-

guish; the naval and military force is silently consumed; and every hour that is wasted by indecision, accustoms the enemy to contemplate, and examine those hostile terrors whose first appearance seemed invincible. Such was the fate of this expedition. The British Commanders retreated with a sigh of despair, and again returned to Jamaica without even attempting a descent which had been delayed until the Spaniards were too well prepared, to afford the most distant prospect of success.

The fate of this extraordinary armament proves how men invested with authority may wantonly sport with the lives of thousands of their fellow creatures which are exposed for the public service. Its movements had fixed the eyes of Europe—its services were confined to the settlement of the little island of Rattan, in the Gulf of Honduras, whose occupation could only open a temporary and confined trade between the British colonies and Guatimala. The fame of Vernon sunk as it had risen, with the fortune of his arms. Two years of strife and suffering, with the sacrifice of so many thousands of their followers, did not, however, allay the enmity of the two commanders, who were ordered home,—not to be tried, but to be caressed, and eventually preferred by the factious influence of their friends; while the spirit of discord passed between Sir Chaloner Ogle and the Governor of Jamaica, whose disgraceful quarrels even the sword could not decide. The dinner-table of the Governor was the scene of an outrage which

brought the Admiral before the tribunal of justice to answer for an assault; and the jealousy of power was exasperated by the difference of character. Ignorance is the ground of suspicion, and suspicion was daily inflamed by provocation. Ogle, though naturally brave and impetuous, was lamentably ignorant in every point not immediately connected with his profession; while the hasty unforgiving temper of the more accomplished Governor exasperated his jealousy, provoked his envy, and took advantage of his dulness. The nice sensibility of honour, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, shed its deadly venom on their quarrels: a division of councils produced a division of power; nothing was undertaken, and the bustle of preparation, or the spoils of war, which had revived the industry and restored the commerce of Jamaica, gave way to that listless state of inactivity which usually succeeds a period of feverish excitement.

A.D. 1744. Oct. 20th. The country was soon, however, awakened from its dangerous torpor by a tremendous hurricane, which swept its surface; while an earthquake convulsed its frame. The greater part of Port Royal was again levelled to its sands; and the formidable lines on Mosquito Point, whose weight of masonry offered a greater resistance, were rent in a thousand places. A pestilence succeeded, as usual, to the ravages of the storm, and a crowd of spectres, pale and emaciated, their bodies oppressed with disease, and their souls by despair,

wandered about the country, or sought the palace of the Governor. Nor were any precautions neglected which might alleviate the sense of so dreadful a calamity. The public stores were thrown open to the distressed inhabitants; temporary buildings were erected in several places, and at the public expense, for the accommodation of the sick or houseless; clothing and medicines were supplied by private or municipal liberality; and a supply of corn and provisions was distributed at a very moderate price. The pestilence raged, however, for many weeks; a large proportion of the population was swept away, and the groans of the dying excited only the envy of their surviving friends. The Governor relieved the country from the severity of martial law, although the neighbourhood of two powerful and hostile fleets demanded extraordinary vigilance, and occasioned a reasonable petition to the throne for a further supply of troops. After the enactment of some salutary laws, to preserve internal tranquillity, the Assembly, which had held twenty-three sessions during a prolonged existence of ten years, was finally dissolved; and its members dispersed to their homes to relieve the general distress, or adopt new measures of defence.

The same year was marked by two events of a very different nature: it beheld the destruction of all vegetation, and the introduction of a new species of plant which overspread the country with a beautiful verdure, accidentally conferring an inestimable

benefit on the island. A cage full of African birds had been presented, as a valuable curiosity, to Chief-Justice Ellis, and with them was sent a small bag of their native food, the wild grass-seed of the coast of Guinea. The birds fortunately died, and left their food unconsumed: the seed was carelessly thrown into a thick hedge, where its luxuriant growth was protected, while it bloomed and spread; and the eagerness of the cattle to reach it, called attention to a vegetable which has since become one of the most valuable productions of the colony.

The Scotch rebellion, by favouring a diversion, now afforded the enemies of England the presumptuous hope of depriving her of an island which they long had viewed with envy and alarm. But the inhabitants of Jamaica, groaning under misfortunes, oppressed with taxes, disregarded in their appeals, and driven almost to desperation by royal ingratitude, the only reward of their services and of their sufferings, were amongst the first to rally round the throne, and to devote their lives and remaining treasures to its service. To protect one of its most important possessions, they denied themselves the comforts of life, and devoted all their means to defence, with a promptitude which views the danger, but without alarm. The misfortunes of civil discord were obliterated, their grievances were forgotten, and if prosperity did not shed its blessings on their land, their conduct deserved at least the praise of active loyalty, and enduring patience.

A.D. 1745.

Providence seemed, indeed, to reward them by a memorable instance of its protection. A conspiracy had been formed with unusual art, by the slaves throughout the island, to rise on a certain day, each band in its own district, and to exterminate the white inhabitants. Within a few hours of its development, a negro girl implored one of the conspirators to spare the infant of her mistress, which she nursed. He refused her request; and to save the object of her affection, she became the saviour of the country. The discovery of the plot displayed the brink of a precipice, down which the inhabitants were to have been hurled by their slaves, who, with all the horrid solemnities of African superstition, had sworn a tremendous oath to spare no blood until their object was attained.

Although this danger was, for a time, dispersed, it added fresh terrors to the depredations of the Spanish cruisers on the coasts, which everywhere left their traces of wanton and barbarous cruelty; and threatened to seduce the disaffected slaves to join them. The beautiful parish of St. Ann, where the heat of the climate is tempered by the vicinity of the sea and mountains, and by the abundance of wood and water; and where the produce of a fertile soil afforded a rich harvest, was still the scene of their most frequent visitations; its houses and canefields were continually in flames, and more than once were the inhabitants borne away in captivity to Cuba. The vigilance of the Governor was unre-

mitted; but it could scarcely guard against these desultory attacks. He visited every part of the island in person, soothed the unfortunate, encouraged the brave, or industrious, reformed the laws, and enforced military discipline. In every department he uniformly distinguished himself by the firmness, the prudence, and the integrity of his conduct. Salutary laws, executed with inflexible resolution, corrected the diseases with which the unworthy Ayscough had infected the colony. In the character of Governor, he was alike assiduous and considerate, desirous to save, but not afraid to strike. In the administration of his court, the judgments of the Chancellor were characterized by attention, discernment, and decision: and if there were any deviations from the strict line of justice, it was in favour of the poor or oppressed. The Assembly paid him the highest possible compliment, by expressing an apprehension lest the vigilance of the Chancery might decline under Governors of less activity or integrity; and their consequent determination to urge its removal into the hands of Commissioners, whenever he should quit the island. To his discreet government the colonists were indebted for that support which enabled them to survive the difficulties which then assailed them.

A. D. 1748. The capture of Fort Louis, by a squadron under the command of Knowles, relieved the island, in some measure, from the distressing attacks of the enemy, and increased its com-

merce by interrupting that of the French and Spaniards. At length a definitive treaty of peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, where Great Britain was bound to deliver two hostages to France until restitution should be made of Cape Breton, and all the conquests which had been achieved in the East or West Indies, before or after the preliminaries were settled. It was also agreed that the Assiento contract should be confirmed for four years, while Saint Vincent, Dominica, Tobago, and Saint Lucia should be considered neutral islands, belonging to the Charaibes. By a strange omission, the right of British subjects to navigate the seas of America, without search, was never mentioned, although that claim had been the origin of the war.

The favourable opportunity of peace was eagerly embraced in Jamaica to examine attentively the condition of the labouring classes, and to revise the penal slave code; for the dangerous influx of barbarous Africans had hitherto overpowered those indulgencies which their masters were anxious to confer. The authority to punish, even to the extremity of mutilation, was vested in the owner of a slave; and he was no less anxious than the object, to mitigate the penalties of the law, or relinquish them into the hands of the magistracy. But when the measure was publicly discussed in the Senate, the slaves deemed it a positive proof of fear rather than as a promising act of favour. They were always ripe for rebellion; and in their midnight

councils hesitated not to avow that if they could but detach this one link of the fragile chain which bound them, their first struggle would soon break the rest. It is not, therefore, surprising that even this humane relaxation of the nerves of discipline was viewed with such trembling anxiety: or that the meditated indulgence was smothered beneath a pile of petitions which loaded the tables of the Legislature. All that could be safely granted to the slaves, fermenting, as they were, by the daily accession of their brethren fresh from the coasts of Africa, was that the murder of one of them should thenceforth be punished as a capital offence.

The confusion of the subject, and the scarcity of authentic memorials, oppose equal difficulties to the attempt to describe the rise and progress, or decline of the state of slavery in Jamaica; though some contemporary writers would have it believed that their strange assertions are founded on unerring data. The mask of humanity is allowed to cover the most glaring inconsistencies, and the enemies, perhaps the assassins, of the character of Jamaica, have demanded vengeance for blood which was never shed, for cruelties which were never perpetrated. We should weigh with caution the assertions of hostile writers—a stream which becomes still more muddy as it flows farther from the source. Surrounded with imperfect fragments, always concise, often obscure, and sometimes contradictory, the impartial historian is reduced to collect, to com-

pare, to conjecture; but he is also compelled to reduce the number, and to qualify the nature of those acts of cruelty which are attributed to the colonies in the West. From the faint glimmering of doubtful and scattered light, assisted by the evidence of tradition; and, with every allowance for the prevailing terror and trouble of the times, there will still be no difficulty in allowing, however, that the slaves of Jamaica were, at no period of British colonization, so hardly worked, so harshly treated, or so inadequately fed, as during the distressing progress of the Spanish war; when the country was laid waste by storm, overrun with barbarians who were daily vomited upon its shores, bringing with them the fresh seeds of war and rapine; and when the European settlers, whose numbers did not amount to one-fifteenth, had so small a hold on them, and so precarious a tenure of the land, that they were unable to secure their obedience by rewarding it, and were, therefore, compelled to have recourse to severity, and the more doubtful operation of fear.

The expenses of a just and necessary war to support the liberty of Europe, fell in more than an equal share upon the inhabitants of Jamaica. Sorely oppressed by fiscal avidity exercised on the hard-earned produce of their industry, the burden was still borne with a cheerfulness disproportioned to their strength. Yet while labouring under these difficulties, and scarcely able to maintain their slaves, or even their own children, they had the

additional mortification of finding themselves wantonly subjected to a further increase of the load of taxation—of seeing all their petitions disregarded, and of hearing the ungrateful threat, that their trade should be transferred to the national enemies of England's crown and government.* But this additional tax was so oppressive, that, whilst the revenue of Great Britain was increased by extortion, it was diminished by despair. A considerable part of the island was abandoned, the quantity of sugar exported sensibly diminished; and nothing but the weakness of the colony prevented an example which was afterwards shown by those of a more vigorous power, that intolerable taxes, imposed either on the production of the soil, or the necessaries of life, must distract, and may provoke, those who will not, or who cannot, relinquish their country. When tranquillity was, at length, restored to Europe, the interests of Jamaica alone were left unprotected; and her participation in the war was, therefore, fearlessly retaliated by her enemies upon her commercial flag. Even when the spirit of freedom had been utterly extinguished, the tamest subjects have sometimes ventured to resist an unprecedented invasion of their property: yet when the patient colonists sought only a mild and legitimate means of relief, it was imperiously forbidden. They would have levied a fair and equitable tax upon the absentees, who enjoy

* Journals of Assembly, vol. iv. pp. 156 and 374.

the fruits of their land without participating in its troubles; but it was forbidden. The experience of the Governor recommended that his Instructions, which prohibited the tax, should be withdrawn, but they remain until this day; and any law affecting absentees must be rejected. Under this depression of their means and power, necessity compelled the planters to persevere in those harsh measures towards their slaves, whose records are still a stain upon their laws; but which alone could have preserved them from inevitable ruin. "La politique," observes a late writer, with much truth, "a des yeux, et point d'entrailles:" but necessity is sometimes violently deprived of both; and the intervention of four thousand miles, and an hundred years, will still allow ample latitude for the embellishment of the fact, the invention of declaimers, and the credulity of the ignorant.

At Madrid the treaty was finally concluded which determined those points omitted in that of Aix-la-Chapelle. The King of Spain agreed to pay an hundred thousand pounds to the South Sea Company as an indemnification for all claims upon his crown, by virtue of the Assiento; and stipulated that the English should be treated as the most favoured nation, and be permitted to take salt at Tortuga;—but still not a word was said about the right of search upon the high seas. The ambitious designs of the House of Bourbon were still, however, peculiarly directed to the destruction of A.D. 1750.

England's empire in the West; and to no point more avowedly than to the colonial trade of Jamaica, where the French and Spanish emissaries were secretly, but busily, employed in poisoning the minds of the Africans, as the British slave ships poured them into the country. The necessity of guarding against such treachery, and the alarming poverty of the country, suggested many measures of precautionary prudence and economy, which occupied the attention of the colonial legislature; but, unfortunately, these expedients generally interfered with the policy, or the prerogative, of the crown. Amongst other regulations proposed, was one for compelling the magistracy to qualify as men of actual property, before they should be permitted to join the vestries in the parochial assessment of annual taxes. Yet although no dogma of constitutional right be more clear, or indisputable, than that the taxes which the exigencies of a government require, should be assessed and raised by those only who pay a proportional part of them, the influence of the crown which nominates, or perhaps the personal interests of the parties who might suffer, caused the failure of the law, and created a violent discord between the several branches of the legislature. Two very substantial improvements, however, signalised the last Assembly of Trelawney—the reduction of the rate of interest from eight, to six per cent.; and the appointment of Commissioners of *nisi prius*, for the recovery of small debts.

A.D. 1751.

The labours of that excellent Governor were at length repaid by the immense reward which waited on their success—by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the increasing prosperity, of which he was the principal author. A just, but melancholy, reflexion embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. He reflected on the instability of a country thus dependent on the character of a single man; he knew from experience the dangerous use, or abuse, of delegated authority; and he trembled at the importance of the island to the public interests of his country. "May it flourish," said he, as he took his leave of it, "may it flourish through all ages. You have no intestine foe; you are now happily in harmony among yourselves; nothing is wanting to complete that happiness, but to be securely fortified against a foreign enemy; which I most ardently wish. I wish it as a Briton. From an honest desire to promote your welfare have I applied to my Royal Master to be relieved, and with pleasure do I resign my trust to a gentleman who has abilities to accomplish that end." The active services of twelve eventful years had undermined a vigorous constitution, and forced him from the island of his choice; but his virtues had shed such a lustre upon the exalted station to which he had been raised, that they long lived in the remembrance of a grateful colony. A.D. 1751. November.

The experienced merit of a ruling Governor is

often acknowledged by his subjects with reluctance, or very frequently denied with partial; and discontented murmurs; while, from the aspiring virtues of his successor, they fondly conceive the most unbounded hopes of private, as well as public, felicity; but the memory of Governor Trelawney was subject to neither of these popular abuses; for to his mild and judicious government succeeded a despotism the most severe; and the peace of the colony was instantly clouded by misfortune and discord. Admiral Knowles had been cruising in these seas since the first attack on Porto Bello, and his interest now raised him to the pre-eminence of rank, and plenitude of power.* He had rendered essential services in fortifying the towns of Kingston and Port Royal, and there he headed a rich and powerful faction, to remove the seat of government from Saint Jago de la Vega;—but he possessed neither the esteem of the public, nor any regard for the interests of the country. His personal bravery was unimpeached; but the bravery of a soldier or a sailor is found, by experience, to be the cheapest, the most common quality of human nature. The vanity of his heart was flattered by his rapid rise; and although he was well aware of his own weakness, and of the strong prejudice against him, he trembled not in accepting the trust of three hundred thousand British subjects, many of them his superiors

* See Note VIII.

in birth, all of them his equals in understanding, or in virtue. To sustain with temper this rapid elevation, required an uncommon share of prudence and ability. But instead of a deportment due to himself, and to those he governed, he gratified his vanity by a marked haughtiness which degraded only himself. He heard their complaints with an air of inattention; interrupted them to give orders to his servants, and, with assumed pride, told them that, if they knew how to conduct themselves, he knew how to govern. He met the Members of an Assembly which his predecessor had convened, and pronounced a studied oration, in which he meant to display his patriotism, and disguise his ambition—but he possessed not the ability to do either. He invaded their liberties, and violated their privileges by his unguarded expressions:—he treated their offers of conciliation with contempt; their demands for justice, with indignation; and he screened himself from public censure by the mean expedient of repeated prorogations. In one of these intemperate dismissals, he erred in nominating the intended day of meeting; and, with shame and confusion, was compelled to rectify his error by a proclamation.

By an official account of the quit-rents, the quantity of land patented at this time amounted to a million and a half of acres;—and the exports to Great Britain, at a medium of four years, were estimated at nearly eight hundred thousand pounds. An accession of a hundred and eight families, with fifteen

artificers, was made under the partial encouragement offered by the legislature; and the colony seemed awakened to a due sense of the danger to be apprehended from the unlimited increase of slaves, and the continued diminution of the white population. Few of the emigrants survived, however, the change of climate, fewer still succeeded in rendering their condition better. The intemperate summer heats made them sick or slothful; they were unwilling, perhaps unequal, to work in a land which had been truly reported as requiring but little labour; and, unable to purchase the assistance of slaves, to raise themselves to that rank in society which its peculiar constitution unfortunately requires, they sunk into their graves overwhelmed by sorrow and disappointment.

The urgent representations of the colonists at length engaged the attention of the British Parliament, where a strong party had been organised against them. The planters and the sugar refiners of London and Bristol were at issue. The former pleaded that the taxes "the gold of affliction,"* which were drained from the bowels of an exhausted people, rendered them unable to continue the cultivation of sugar; the latter complained of the price to which the duties had raised it; and petitioned "that the proprietors of land in Jamaica should be compelled

* Suidas.—There was, however, no Timotheus in Jamaica to celebrate the tax, or contribute to its abolition.

to cultivate greater quantities of sugar-cane grounds; or that *they* might be permitted to import it from other countries." All was dark and contradictory. As at the present day, the actual state of Jamaica was unknown, and the King was satisfied with ordering the printed Acts of the Assembly, between the years 1681 and 1737, to be laid before his Commons. The cause of the colony was ably supported there; and, amongst the many stern opposers of a system of unparalleled taxation, the first to raise the standard, and the last to bend the knee, was Alderman Beckford: but he was too powerfully opposed by Sir William Yonge, Townshend, Pelham, and a multitude of statesmen in the interest of the treasury.

The Spanish cruisers still continued to harass the peaceful shores of Jamaica, against all the laws of Christian states; and their depredations were encouraged and increased, by the passive submission with which they were borne. Much might certainly be allowed to the irritations of national animosity; much to humbled pride, and mortified ambition, and much more, perhaps, to the continued provocations of a few Kingston merchants; yet the savage acts of Spanish piracy bore no appearance of the legitimate reprisals of an injured commerce, although strangely sanctioned by its country's flag. It is but justice to the Court of Madrid to record, however, that when Sir B. Keene officially complained, he received for answer an assurance that the names of all the *guarda costas* acting by legal authority, together with those

of their Captains, should be sent to the Admiral at Port Royal; and that they should have immediate orders not to interfere with any British ships, except such as were carrying on an illicit trade.* This was certainly letting them loose against Jamaica; and the development of the clandestine traffic, carried on there, was made about thirteen years afterwards, when orders were given at the Treasury "for the free admission of Spanish vessels into all the colonies:" an order exposing what ought to have been concealed; and which multiplied the penalties, by awakening the vigilance, which might have counteracted it. It was, in fact, the compliance of one government, at the request of its colonies, to authorise smuggling into the colonies of another state with which it was at peace; as if it would be right to encourage disobedience in your neighbour's children, because your own would gain by it. When the collectors at the several free ports transmitted their returns to England, the Court of Madrid contrived to get copies of them; and the destruction of many persons, who had been concerned in introducing bullion into the British islands, was the immediate consequence. Information of the horrid cruelties committed under the sanction of the Spanish Government induced the British ministers speedily to revoke their instructions. But the nation was unwilling to embroil itself in another war, and left the

* See Note IX.

pirates to the Admiralty powers of Jamaica, which were signally exerted in the condemnation of two Spanish brothers, who declared that they acted under a royal commission. The importunity of the Spanish ambassador could not save them; and they were executed for a crime of which their country and our own alike were guilty.

Influenced by the artful representations of Governor Knowles, the British Cabinet ventured on a change in the constitutional privileges of the Colonial Assembly, which greatly widened the differences, already subsisting between him and his people. In a money-bill, the House had appointed an officer of its own to administer the duties of the public treasury; and in some other enactments had omitted a clause suspending execution until the Sovereign's pleasure should be known. These bills the Governor refused to pass; and he produced an instruction "not to give his assent to any bill of unusual or extraordinary nature and importance, wherein his Majesty's prerogative, or the property of his subjects might be prejudiced, or the trade or shipping of the kingdom any ways affected, unless there should be a clause inserted suspending the execution of such a bill until his Majesty's pleasure should be known." To this A.D. 1753. Oct. 29. the House opposed a resolution, "that it is the undoubted right of the representatives of the people to raise and apply monies for the service and exigencies of the government, and to appoint such persons for receiving and issuing

thereof, as they shall think proper; which right it had exerted, and would always exert." "Moreover, that, by letters-patent granted by Charles II., and all subsequent letters-patent, all laws and ordinances, made by the Assembly, and assented to by the Governor, were *immediately* in force and effect; and continued to be so till they were disannulled by the crown." This was a repetition of the memorable attempt, in the year 1664, to exclude the crown from the privilege of a double negative.* Four years afterwards a Committee of the House of Commons declared this resolution illegal, repugnant to the terms of the King's commission to his Governor, and derogatory of the rights of the crown and people of Great Britain; that the Assembly had proceeded on a manifest misapprehension of the King's instructions to the Governor, requiring him not to give his assent to any bill of an unusual nature, without a suspending clause; and that such just and necessary instruction was no alteration of the constitution, nor by any means derogatory of the rights of the people of Jamaica.

After the discussion of this point, however, the altercations between the Governor and his Assembly rose to a most unbecoming height; and to relieve himself from an embarrassment into which his impetuosity had led him, he dissolved the House under the absurd plea, that amongst the members there sat a youth who, for an inconsiderate frolic at Oxford, had lately been punished, and held to bail.

* See Vol. I. page 263, of the Annals of Jamaica.

At the distance of only seventy-four years it is still difficult to convict or to vindicate the guilt or folly of the chief actors in these disgraceful scenes; for the voice of common tradition is generally little more than the organ of hatred or adulation; but it is certain that, however Knowles might occasionally bind himself by oaths and promises, his conscience, obsequious to his interest, released him from all inconvenient obligation; that his allegations against the Assembly, which charged that body with nothing short of treason, were the effect only of his own intrigues, and proved that he promised only to betray, and flattered only to ruin. Suspicious men in power generally promote the last of mankind, from a vain persuasion that those who have no dependence except on their favour, can have no attachment except to their person. Such were his sentiments; and encouraged by the opinions of a few parasites, who directed his councils and abused his confidence, he had now brought to maturity a project, to the accomplishment of which he was urged by those mercantile friends in Kingston, whose houses and whose purses had been open to his necessities when he held a very subordinate rank on the station. This was no other than the removal of the seat of government to their town; and however we may be inclined to commend his gratitude, we must condemn the proof of it, at the expense of a community. The obscurity of Jamaica history leaves us in the dark, as to the actual price at which the Governor's influence was pur-

chased; nor can we penetrate very deeply into the mysteries of the King's house. Of the favours which he received, or the services which he promised, I am alike ignorant: but it is certain that, without further notice, he endeavoured to repay the one, and to redeem the other, by commanding the next Assembly to leave their house, and to meet him in the town of Kingston.

A.D. 1754.

## Chapter XII.

Removal of the Seat of Government.—Comparative Advantages of Kingston and Saint Jago de la Vega.—Intrigues of the Governor.—Rebellion of the Slaves.—Capture of the Havanna, and Prosperity of Jamaica.—Government of Lyttleton.—His Impeachment.—Administration of Eletson.—Dissensions between the Legislative Bodies.—Arrival and Death of Sir William Trelawney.

[A.D. 1754—1772.]

History, which undertakes to record the transactions of the past for the instruction of future ages, would ill-deserve that honourable office if she condescended to plead the excuse of tyrants, or to justify the vicious maxims of a corrupt administration. Yet it must be acknowledged that falsehood and insincerity offend with a less degree of meanness in a public character, than when found in the ordinary intercourse of private life. In the latter case they discover a want of courage—in the former only a want of power: and as the mere personal strength of the most able statesman is not alone sufficient to enable him to govern well, the world, under the specious name of policy, has indulgently granted him a very liberal share of craft and dissimulation. But the intrigues which were employed by Governor Knowles, to effect the removal of the seat of government, cannot be justified by the most modern and liberal indulgences, or by the most ample privileges

of the art of government. To the few individuals whose interested views gave rise to the project, he had, however, in the fancied plenitude of his power, solemnly pledged himself; and his popular services were a convenient mask for his dark and dangerous ambition. His passions were strong, his understanding feeble; and he was intoxicated with a foolish pride, that his ambition had given him the command of a colony, the smallest parish in which would not have chosen him for its local magistrate. In his weak attempt he found a thousand obstacles to remove, and as many prejudices to conquer; but he had the resource of a base mind. False accusations removed some impediments; and aware that few can be found innocent where an enemy is the judge, he associated in his pernicious councils the chief magistrate of Kingston, and the chief judge of the island. These men, the tools of his oppression, the minions of his unprincipled designs, were bound to secrecy by a mutual consciousness of guilt: and by the allurements of honours and rewards, they invited informers of every degree to accuse or betray the public authorities, and the magistracy of the island, whose influence might obstruct their views; they directed, in a whisper, the public councils, and blasted, by their malicious suggestions, the fame and fortunes of the most virtuous and independent. The literary assistance of Brown, the naturalist, was also useful to a man who had neither the ability nor the inclination to wield a powerful or a persuasive pen;

and the narrow policy of the King's House adopted the mischievous expedient of supporting a legal government by the interest of a venal, or, at best, of a suspicious party. The claims of merit, and even those of favour, were disregarded by the new creatures of his choice, and it was but reasonable to expect that the adventurer who had undertaken the trade of a magistrate should seek a compensation for former infamy and labour, the debts which he had contracted, and the heavy interest which he paid. Suspicion was equivalent to proof—trial to condemnation. Knowles eagerly listened to those who suggested to him that his honour, as well as his interest, was concerned in the effort he was to make; and the colonists had everything to dread from the severity of a man who possessed the arts of a statesman, the valour of a soldier, and the cruelty of a tyrant; and who prepared the measures of violence with such deliberate policy. In his venal mind, the slightest hope of private emolument outweighed every consideration of public advantage, and his guilt was alleviated only by his incapacity of discerning the pernicious effects of his rash and criminal administration. His best and earliest friends were, however, soon disgusted. Coldness and indifference, or hatred, everywhere preceded his approach, for he was as odious in his private life as fearful in his public career*; and he was taught a salutary truth, which it would be well if his suc-

* See Note X.

cessors were to profit by,—that, though he might, for a time, command the obedience of the Jamaica people, he must deserve their attachment as a friend.

Saint Jago de la Vega had remained the unrivalled seat of government ever since the destruction of the Spanish city of Seville d'Oro; and, though an open, defenceless town, exposed to the incursions of every domestic or foreign enemy, there were powerful reasons which made it desirable that it should remain so: for it is so situated, that two-thirds of the extended length of the island lie to the westward of it; and the removal to Kingston, thirteen miles farther to the east, would render the division of the island more unequal, and the local facilities still less. On the other hand, Kingston, the mart of an extensive trade, the emporium, in fact, of the West Indies, offered advantages in the preservation and security of the public records, which Saint Jago could never boast. Strong by nature, and rendered more strong by art, it was guarded, by its situation, from any hostile attack, yet accessible on every side to the benefits of commercial intercourse. The local position of Kingston might seem, indeed, to have been selected by nature for the centre and capital of a monarchy. It was bounded on the south by a spacious basin, through which all vessels must advance beneath the commanding batteries of Port Royal. The inclined plane, upon the verge of which it stands, was inclosed, on the north, by the loftiest ridge of the Blue Mountain chain, which, forming a

semicircle, terminated, in the east, at the narrow defile of Rock Fort; from whence a long neck of land stretches far away to Port Royal, forming the southern barrier of a beautiful haven: while, in the west, it terminated, at a contracted pass, upon the edge of an impracticable lagoon—a dreary wilderness, in which the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air infectious. From thence the main land, sweeping round to Port Henderson and the Salt Pond hills, again projects, and secures an harbour, in which the united navy of Europe might safely ride. The entrance was defended, on the eastern point of the Delta of Port Royal, by the formidable ramparts of Fort Charles, thickly studded with heavy ordnance: on the western side by the cannon of Rock Fort; while the low, raking shot from the long and level lines of Fort Augusta, which face the narrow channel, would sweep an hostile navy off the ocean.

Another advantage might also tend to reconcile the removal of the seat of government to Kingston. The necessary attendance of a mercantile community upon the courts of justice would be accompanied by less expense, and more convenience, at the centre of commerce, than in a town thirteen miles distant, which offered no attraction, supplied no wants, and depended entirely upon Kingston for its daily sustenance: and that nothing might be wanting on the part of the citizens, who would benefit by the change, they liberally offered, not only to build a

palace for the Governor, and a senate house for the Legislature, but also to remunerate the losses of the dishonoured town.

Thus far every consideration appeared to sanction the projected removal, for Kingston enjoyed, without fear or danger, the three blessings of a capital—order, plenty, and public amusement, or commercial occupations. Beauty, safety, and wealth, united in a single spot, seemed indeed to justify the preference which Knowles had given to his favoured town. The duties of impartial justice were still, however, clear, and well defined. The voice of the colony was loud, and plainly told him that he was sacrificing the interests and invading the rights of thirteen parishes, to confer a very equivocal benefit on five. But when he polluted the fountains of justice to obtain his end—violated by power, or perverted by subtlety, those laws and liberties which it was his duty to defend—when he sent his servants to vote at the elections, and to return his own creatures to serve in his Assembly—when a direct sale of honours and of offices was openly transacted in the King's House—when he imprisoned his subjects, refused them the constitutional right of Britons, and blushed not to betray his friends—the dark designs of Knowles assumed the character of that scandalous venality and oppression with which posterity has stamped them; and we should become the accomplices of his malignity if we concealed the fact.

The personal authority of the Governor could

convene the Legislature when and where he pleased; but it extended not to the removal of the courts of justice, or of the public records; and he was compelled to submit that measure to a senate, duly instructed, he hoped, in his own intrigues. Therein, however, he was deceived. Three assemblies met, deliberated, and were dissolved for disobedience, within the short space of three months. The fourth was less scrupulous, and more submissive: the passions of the purchased legislators were expressed in the language of declamation and invective; and they clamourously passed the fatal act. The subserviency of the council was not, however, perfect;—two, and they were its two senior members, maintained their principles, uncorrupted by bribery, unawed by power. The name of Sir Simon Clarke is familiar to the Jamaica reader as the stern opponent of injustice; but his opposition was vain, and the removal was formally decreed. The King was addressed by the Assembly to confirm the law, and was petitioned by the whole island to annul it. The current of public opinion, contracted into a narrow channel, runs with the strength and sometimes with the fury of a torrent. Seasonable libels were dispersed in all quarters, and the most open invective painted, in lively colours, the oppression of the tyrant of Jamaica. But the man who is lost to principle is dead to shame. There is a providence that watches over impudence and folly; and the

A.D. 1755.

May 7th.

pretensions of Knowles to its peculiar care cannot be disputed: he therefore triumphed, and hoped that the King, guided from a distance, would confirm the validity, without examining the justice of the act.* But the disorders to which his folly had given rise were not unknown in London: his intrigues were reported with fidelity, and confirmed by proof; and it was soon politely hinted to him, that he might retire from his government. He did retire; and his memory in Jamaica was consigned to infamy: his acts were rescinded, his victims reinstated, and, under the gentle administration of his successor, while the innocent were restored to their rank and fortunes, even the most guilty either obtained pardon, or escaped punishment.

A.D. 1756.

It was in the Assembly of Knowles's choice that an outrage was committed which caused the expulsion of eighteen of its members. A man had been returned as elected by the parish of Saint Elizabeth, during his absence from the island, and without his knowledge; and it was therefore resolved that the election should be void. An accusation of perjury had also been preferred by one member against another, and the accuser, failing to substantiate his charge, was punished by expulsion. Their respective friends immediately left their seats, and attempted in a body to quit the House; but the doors

* See Note XI.

were secured, swords were drawn, and after a serious altercation, an order was entered on the minutes, that none should dare to quit the hall. Sixteen Members addressed a remonstrance to the Speaker, complained of the tumult, declared their lives in danger, and urged, in no very temperate language, that the fear of personal violence had induced them to set the Speaker's warrant at defiance. To such an assembly it was in vain to appeal; and the royal mandate required that the opinion of the colony, as to the removal of the seat of government, should be taken through the medium of representatives less corrupt and turbulent than these. Another was therefore immediately convened in Saint Jago; and its first act was to petition the throne against the measure. The Council was attached to the person of Knowles, and had been promoted by his favour: its patrician permanency secured to it, therefore, the equivocal praise of consistency, for its members adhered to the opinions and the principles of their fallen patron.*

The royal disallowance of the act of removal was at length proclaimed; and Lieut.-Governor Moore was empowered to hold the Courts, over which he presided, when and where he considered most convenient. Thirty waggons loaded with the public records, and escorted by a large body of the military, were met at the ferry by a detachment from the garrison of Saint

A.D. 1758. Oct. 3d.

Oct. 7th.

* See Note XII.

Jago, and restored in triumph to their ancient depository. Public entertainments, of which every class partook, celebrated the event: Knowles, with his ship, the Cornwall, was tumultuously burnt in effigy, in the centre of the great square, and the darkness of several successive nights was illuminated by the blaze of torches and fireworks. The low murmurs of discontent, which arose from the five disappointed parishes, were drowned by a proclamation which divided the island into judiciary districts, and by a declaration which made Kingston, Savanna la Mar, Montego Bay, and Port Antonio, free ports: measures which soon united all interests, and healed all wounds; while such additional wheels in the machine of government rendered its motion both more rapid, and more secure. The system of administration under Moore was accurate; that of superintendence not less so. The fountain of justice was once more cleansed by the removal of Pinnock, the corrupt chief justice, who was consigned to the ignominy which, in every age and country, has attended the character of an informer; but some of his creatures, scarcely less notorious than himself, were protected by a general act of oblivion, and left to enjoy with impunity the bribes which they had accepted either to befriend the oppressed, or to oppress the friendless. To secure Saint Jago as far as possible against any future attempts to deprive it of its privileges, the public buildings were commenced—an

Oct. 21st.

immense pile of spacious apartments intended to contain under one roof the senate house, the assize court, the jury room, and the speaker's chamber, with piazza and lobbies above; and below, the various offices of the courts of law, the secretaries, and clerks of the several departments. The church was also enlarged and adorned; and an organ of considerable size and power was erected at the public expense.*

On two occasions the flames of civil discord had, however, nearly broken out afresh: one was an attempt of the Assembly to refuse the elective franchise to the members of the council; a measure suggested by the subserviency of some of its members to the corrupt purposes of the late Governor; the other, when a claim was made by the House to the exclusive privilege of franking letters. Neither object was attained; and half the council peevishly threatened to throw up their seals; but the judicious management of Moore allayed the tumult. He had seen, perhaps he had felt, the abuses of a venal and oppressive administration; and his own example gave weight and energy to his exertions to establish the peace of the colony. He eminently succeeded in the attempt, until its civil administration was interrupted by its military defence.

M. de Mirepoix had left London without the usual audience of leave; and M. de Cosue was ordered

* See Note XIII.

from Paris with as little ceremony: a declaration of war seemed therefore inevitable; and it fell too soon upon Jamaica. The fortifications were all dilapidated, the means of defence few and precarious; the estimated cost of providing them exceeded the revenue, or the revenue fell short of the computation, and the island was obliged to borrow six thousand pounds from the golden chests of Chancery, hitherto untouched; so low had the late administration reduced its resources. It was the praise of Governor Trelawney that, under circumstances of peculiar alarm and danger, he left a treasure without increasing the taxes: it was the reproach of Governor Knowles that, with an increase of taxes, and in a time of profound peace, he left behind him a considerable debt.

The public danger should have reconciled all domestic calamities, but it only displayed the incurable madness of political faction. It became necessary to enforce martial law; and the opportunity of disturbing the public harmony was not lost by the council, who made it a plea for refusing to sit during its continuance in a legislative capacity.* The Lieut.-Governor was therefore compelled to adjourn the sitting of the Assembly, but not until he had suspended the disobedient members of his own ungovernable board.

A.D. 1759. July. In the spring of the succeeding year, Haldane, who had attended General Hopson in his expedition against Guadaloupe, assumed the

* See Note LXXII. Vol. i.

government. His health had been ruined by that laborious service, and in a few weeks his friends wept over his untimely grave, when Moore resumed, and judiciously administered, the executive, until the accession of George the Third. A.D. 1760.

There were, however, wounds in Jamaica which had long been bleeding inwardly—the more dangerous as they showed no external effusion, to discover their existence: and when the colonists were viewing in a deceitful mirror the opening prospect of prosperity, a formidable enemy was collecting in the bosom of the country, and they found themselves involved in a contest which required, and seemed to exceed, the most vigorous exertions of their undivided strength. The disaffected slaves, who since the last revolt had not been watched with that vigilance which African perfidy requires, had become so strong and formidable, that they meditated nothing less than the extirpation of the white inhabitants. Two Coromantee savages,—their barbarous names were Tacky and Jamaica,—were the projectors of a conspiracy in which were evinced more than ordinary skill and caution; for they had to guard against the treachery of their countrymen who remained faithful to their masters' cause. It therefore became necessary to observe the strictest secrecy in their midnight consultations, and yet to give effect to their plans which required the concurrence of all the disaffected throughout the island.

It is not very important to inquire into the causes

which produced this servile rebellion, though detraction will doubtless ascribe it to the cruelty of the European owner. But accident is commonly the parent of disorder; and the seeds of rebellion here fall on a soil peculiarly fruitful. Easter Monday was to be the fatal signal for a general massacre, and the first movement proved the destruction of the garrison, and the seizure of the Fort at Port Maria, where the slaves belonging to Captain Forrest made themselves masters of the ammunition, arms, and stores. The inhabitants of the neighbouring country were assembled to celebrate the holiday, and they were all barbarously butchered at the supper table. The slaves advanced and retreated with a rapid diligence which surprised the security, and eluded the pursuit, of their victims; until Mr. Bayley, a wealthy proprietor, who had miraculously escaped their hands, rallied a small band of resolute dependents, came suddenly upon their haunts in Ballard's valley, and drove them into the woods. The rivulet through which they passed was stained with blood, for the negroes there attempted to make a stand which astonished their pursuers. Far from being dispirited by this check, the rebels, familiar with the intricacies of the country, collected their scattered strength, and, seizing the opportunity of a dark and rainy day, poured with irresistible fury upon the scattered inhabitants of the adjacent country. Every hour produced some horrid tale of strange and wanton cruelty; and the sad tidings were spread

with the speed of grief and terror. Martial law was proclaimed, and Moore headed the two British regiments in person, while the Maroons acted as auxiliaries. A party of these Maroons arrived on the scene of action just as the insurgents had suffered a defeat at Heywood Hall: they were ordered to pursue, and in a few hours they returned with a sack full of human ears,* demanding the reward, which was paid them. It was soon discovered, however, that they had been taken from the bodies killed in the previous action. Some days after this, a detachment of the seventy-fourth regiment, which was stationed with the Maroons at Down's Cove, a place surrounded by deep and gloomy woods, was attacked in the night, the sentinels were shot, the huts fired, and by their light the troops were exposed to the unerring aim of a numerous and concealed foe. Major Forsyth formed his men into a square, and at length, by a well-directed fire, compelled the rebels to retire. But the Maroons were missing, and it was suspected that they had joined the slaves, until it was discovered that, in the first onset, they had thrown themselves prostrate on the earth, and continued there until the danger was at an end. The disciplined troops found, to their cost, that however despicable their foes might appear, caution and vigilance were still the most important lessons in the art

* In the battle of Lignitz, in the 13th century, where the Moguls and Tartars defeated the Dukes of Silesia, they filled nine sacks with the right ears of the slain.

of war. Moore was twice taken in ambuscade, and narrowly escaped the most barbarous of deaths. He had spared through humanity, but he now punished from necessity. After some examples of success and severity, he set a price upon the heads of the rebels, and it was not long before he was plentifully supplied with them, by their treacherous countrymen. On all occasions of danger, he inspired and guided the valour of his troops, and was often obliged to expose his person and exert his abilities. But though his men were disciplined and bold, this new species of warfare, so painful and lingering, so obscure and ignominious, wearied their patience, and consumed their hopes. On the other hand, the partial defeats and losses of the African chieftains served only to strengthen their force, and display their courage, or their cruelty. Their situation was often indeed desperate: but the efforts of despair are sometimes formidable. Impatient of fatigue, or delay, these half-armed warriors rushed to battle with dissonant shouts, and they always preferred a certain advantage, and speedy retreat, to a fair trial of the chance of war. They fixed their rude camp upon a lofty and almost inaccessible rock, and there resolutely awaited the approach of the troops. The rustic horn, or native shell, interrupted the midnight silence of the woods, and their ranks were daily multiplied by the numerous slaves who obeyed the well-known signal. The life of Moore was once exposed to imminent danger by the intrepid curiosity with which he persisted in

exploring a secret and unguarded path. The barbarians rose in ambush around him: he vigorously spurred his horse down a steep and slippery descent—the animal fell, and, but for his consummate skill as a marksman, his pistols would scarcely have relieved him from three athletic slaves who rushed upon him. At length his troops came up, the rebels were driven into a narrow pass, their chieftains fell by the first discharge of a small field-piece, many prisoners were captured, and the survivors, for a time, dispersed. In this last action the Maroons exhibited a disgusting instance of their native barbarity. They seized the body of Tacky, and after taking his head as a trophy, they roasted and devoured the heart of their countryman.

Encouraged by the disaffected slaves, who continued to flock to the sound of their shell, and animated by the hope of a reinforcement from the free negroes, the dispersed rebels soon rallied, and rose again, in various directions, nothing dismayed by their late defeat. Armed with rustic weapons, and with irresistible fury, they issued from their haunts; appeared determined to try the chance of battle; and their secret movements in the woods disconcerted the grave and elaborate tactics of the British troops. A fight commenced in the morning, and was maintained till the sun was set, and the night fallen; while the soldiers were astonished at their unusual courage and their formidable numbers. The sincerity of history declares that the glory of Jamaica

was sullied by the disobedience of her defenders, who were beaten back, and exposed to severe hardships in the centre of a wild and unfrequented country. The calamity was ascribed, without proof perhaps, but not without probability, to the defection of the militia, some of whom had secret and tender reasons for desiring to spare the lives of certain slaves opposed to them. A veil of obscurity is, however, drawn over the circumstances of this disgraceful transaction; and all we know is, that Moore instantly assembled the free negroes, put them under experienced officers, and while the militia in the distant parishes ran to arms, he headed the forty-ninth European regiment himself. In a partial engagement he gained some advantage; but as the agility of the barbarians saved them from slaughter, and their woods protected them from pursuit, his victory was neither bloody nor decisive. From the vale of Bagnals he advanced through the thick forests of Saint Mary, convinced himself of the extraordinary difficulties of the war, and was compelled again to retreat, during the rainy season, discontented with the country, with the troops, and with his own success.

The power of the enemy was yet unbroken: their strength was daily increased by a stream of deserters which flowed from every district of the island; and no sooner had the Governor dispersed his troops into quarters in the vale, than they descended upon the estates with barbarous impetuosity, massacred the whites, drove the cattle from the flaming cane-

fields, and everywhere left deep and bloody traces of their progress. With a light and unencumbered band, Moore determined to pass the river, and surprise the enemy in their woods. The silent hour of midnight was chosen for the attempt; he marched five miles up the valley, and, favoured by the darkness, would infallibly have succeeded in the enterprise, had not his bold and judicious plans been frustrated by the unrestrained impetuosity of his men. The negroes were alarmed by a premature shout, rushed to their arms, and fought with desperation. Being allowed no time to conceal themselves amongst the rocks in their usual mode of fighting, they repeatedly charged with fury, and were repulsed with loss. They once indeed drew the troops into ambush, and displayed no little military skill in retreating to a narrow pass, where they obtained a decided advantage against a superiority of numbers. With stones and branches of trees, hurled from the rocks above, they committed a dreadful carnage, and the action at Bagnals almost assumed the name of a battle. But it was no victory to either party. Attacked, on every side, by a foe whose movements could never be traced or seen, and reduced to the resources of his own mind to extricate himself from a hazardous situation, where he could neither remain with safety, nor retire with honour, Moore displayed a prudent intrepidity which compensated for the inexperience of his men, and the novel difficulties of a savage mode of war. His fears were

not without foundation, nor his precautions without effect: for he heard the well-known shell sounding in his rear, far back in the woods, and with timely speed he retreated by another pass, found means to alarm the troops he had left in the vale, and as morning broke, the slaves found themselves surrounded, cut off from the dark recesses of their forests, and surprised in an open country. With desperate fury they fought to the last: some were, however, taken prisoners, and were executed with a degree of solemnity which might strike, it was hoped, a seasonable terror into the breasts of those who yet remained in arms.

The records of crime and punishment can hardly equal, or excuse, the horrible barbarities and exquisite tortures which were inflicted by, and upon, these condemned rebels. Some of them were burned—some were fixed alive on gibbets—one of them lived two hundred and ten hours, suspended under a vertical sun, without any sustenance, or even a drop of water; yet they all behaved to the last moment with a degree of hardened insolence and brutal insensibility, which drowned compassion, and almost authorized their doom; and the reader will probably feel far more for the fate of these wretched sufferers, than did the most humane of those who witnessed their expiring agonies.

Many of their countrymen were, however, still left to revenge their death, and, with their women and children, resolved rather to die by their own

hands than to yield to the fate they had now cause to apprehend. But a milder sentiment, urged by the authority of their leaders, or enforced, perhaps, by the neighbourhood of the Maroons, at length prevailed; and a suppliant crowd repaired to the Governor's quarters, to learn their fate from the mouth of their conqueror. They implored, and experienced, the clemency they had so little reason to expect: peace was granted to them; and they were soon convinced, by the liberal distribution of reward and punishment, that the friendship of their masters was preferable to their enmity. About ninety white persons were the victims of this rebellion—of the rebels more than four hundred were slain—many destroyed themselves in the woods, where their skeletons were found suspended to the lofty branches of a cotton tree—and about six hundred were transported to the Bay of Honduras. Some, however, still concealed themselves in the interior of the island, and from their trackless haunts were driven by the want of food, or the gratifications of their native cruelty, to show themselves on the lowlands, where they invariably left traces of their wanton barbarity. Their private revenge was exercised without remorse or pity, and the ignominious lashes, which had formerly been received, were wiped away in the blood of their guilty or obnoxious masters. It was seriously apprehended that another conspiracy was forming, and that the slaves, who had hitherto remained faithful, would become bolder

by the success of their fellows who had ventured to take up arms. Various regulations were therefore adopted. No slave was to quit his plantation without a ticket of leave—no alarms, by drum or shell, were to be sounded by them—the prevailing vices of gaming or drinking were strictly forbidden, and every free negro, or mulatto, was compelled to wear a blue cross, as a conspicuous badge, upon his right shoulder. Shops and taverns were ordered to be closed on Sundays, and no slave was allowed to travel with any thing for sale except fresh fish and milk.

But the operation of the wisest laws is imperfect and precarious—they seldom inspire virtue, even in the breast of the most civilized of mankind—they can never be expected to restrain vice, therefore, in the most barbarous: their power is generally insufficient to prohibit what they condemn, nor can they always punish what they prohibit. The disadvantages under which the slave code of Jamaica exists must, therefore, be apparent—disregarded by its objects, distrusted by its framers, and made the subject of bitter reproach by its enemies. The policy of England had introduced into her colonies a nation of savages, against whom the colonists were compelled to protect their lives by every means in their power; and the salutary regulations adopted, the frequent punishments by which it was necessary to enforce them, with the labour exacted from those who never laboured before, but found their food in their own

species, did not tend to allay the passions of the barbarous Africans, whose strength and numbers were daily increasing. The impartial historian, who acknowledges the justice of some of their grievances, which were inevitable, and who deplores that Jamaica is not more free from crime and cruelty than his own native land, still cannot fail to observe many favourable circumstances in the condition of negro slavery; an institution which every one must bewail, but no power can immediately relieve. The slaves who in their native land were worse than slaves, and poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation, were here fed and clothed, and protected from all the evils of helpless poverty, or neglected sickness, which fall so heavily upon the European labourers. Their condition was gradually rising in the scale of humanity, and the tide of Christianity which, in the wilds of Africa, never could have reached them, was here flowing with a gentle but accelerated motion; though the current of improvement was sometimes checked or averted, by the unhappy circumstances of the times, and the mistaken policy of the parent country—by their own passions, or by the prudence of their masters, who were obliged artfully to balance the influence of hope and fear.

The internal tranquillity of the colony was still far from being established. The threatening tempest, which soon shook it to its foundations, was gathering over the midland mountains, and in the depth

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of its forests, on whose confines it was hardly repelled or suspended. The Government found it unsafe to trust the Maroons too far, and the rebels always retreated to fastnesses impenetrable to European troops: so that the planters were obliged to be continually under arms, while Admiral Holmes made such a judicious disposal of his squadron, as secured the island from the invasion of a foreign foe.

To Lieutenant-Governor Moore succeeded William Lyttleton, the late Governor of South Carolina. He brought the intelligence of the general seizure of British shipping in all the ports of Spain, and of the immediate neighbourhood of a Spanish squadron which menaced Jamaica with invasion, and the town of Kingston with a siege. The declaration of war soon followed, and the increase of the squadron on the station enabled the new Governor to commence his administration by the popular measure of relieving the country from the fatiguing vigilance of martial law. The co-operation of the two corps, naval and military, afforded a strong contrast with the late unfortunate expeditions under Vernon and Wentworth. The most constant and cheerful emulation excited each service to render it but one, uniting in the same principles of honour and glory for their king and country's service. Lyttleton had also the pleasing duty of announcing the success of the British arms under the Earl of Lauderdale and Sir George Pocock, in the reduction of the important city and fortress of the Havanna; an event which

stands recorded amongst the foremost of those great achievements which eminently distinguish the late memorable reign; and towards which Jamaica, with her usual spirit, contributed a large subsidiary force. Royal property to the amount of two millions sterling, exclusive of an immense artillery, with twelve sail of the line, and a fleet of merchantmen, rewarded the gallant exploit. Martinique, Grenada, Tobago, Saint Vincent, and St. Lucia, had already bowed to the British arms, and the invincible Rodney scoured the seas. Five French frigates, captured on the coast of Hispaniola, were brought into Port Royal, and the wealth of the colony was hourly increased by the rich prizes which again poured their glittering treasures on its shores*.

Amidst all this flow of wealth the want of a circulating medium was never so severely felt in Jamaica. The illicit traders, sailing in ballast under Jamaica clearances, carried off all the money for the purchase of French produce in Saint Domingo; and to retain a sufficiency for internal circulation, the Assembly was obliged to stamp and issue a hundred thousand dollars at an advance of two-pence each upon their former rate. The King's house, which had been designed by Mr. Craskell, was completed, and furnished at an expense of thirty thousand pounds, the banks of the Rio Cobre were vivified by elegant villas, or well-cultivated farms, and the inhabitants of St. Jago seemed resolved to render their town worthy of the

* See Note XIV.

preference it had now established. They opened an ample space in the savannas around, established again a stand of hackney coaches, regulated their police, and were illustrious by their spirit, or at least by their pride—by their riches, or at least by their luxury. The island, indeed, preserved a more flourishing condition during the latter end of thi war, than it had known for almost a century before in times of peace. The face of the country everywhere displayed again the arts and rewards of industry; for in the first months of his administration Lyttleton veiled his designs by a fair semblance of hypocrisy, and Jamaica proved that while she sustained adversity with firmness, she could improve prosperity by prudence. Her resources were always at the command of the British government, and she

A.D. 1763. frequently volunteered them to assist the enterprises of the war. The definitive treaty, which closed the struggle, was greatly in her favour; for it left her in the possession of the sugar trade, unrivalled by Martinique or Guadaloupe *. Nor had she a grievance to complain of, except the continuance of those heavy taxes which had been imposed during the war, and the first drain upon the colony which was opened by the departure of those who had made their fortunes, to spend their wealth in Europe. The magazines, the forts, the troops, and the militia, were all in excellent condition; agriculture was increasing and prolific; and a

* See Note XV.

formidable squadron on the station effectually secured the trade. The vast acquisition of territory which fell to Great Britain by the treaty, opened new markets for the produce of her land, and the concessions obtained from Spain in favour of the logwood trade, secured the most important advantages, without any exposure to precarious situations. The exigencies of the public service required an unexpected vote of credit, and in the sportive flow of wealth a public lottery was proposed and adopted, under the authority of the Assembly, and the management of the Receiver-General.

Soon after the termination of the war an accident happened which destroyed one of the finest fortresses in Jamaica, perhaps in the West Indies. The magazine of Fort Augusta, containing three thousand barrels of powder, was struck by lightning; three hundred human beings were blown to atoms; the buildings, the bastions, and even the guns, were destroyed; and a pool of water, twenty feet deep, fifty broad, and a hundred long, was cut in the earth; the only mark to decide, amidst a mass of ruins, where the disaster had originated.

The peace of the colony was not, however, of long duration, exposed as it was to the evil influence of a vicious governor. The harmony, which the judicious Moore had successfully laboured to establish, was interrupted by the artful Lyttleton, who commenced his violence in the capacity of Chancellor, and committed a flagrant breach

A.D. 1764.

of the privileges of the Senate by cancelling the speaker's warrant for the commitment of an offender against one of its most important immunities. A merchant of Saint Jago, having caused a writ to be executed upon the coach-horses of one of the members of Assembly, the House, indignant at the insult, ordered the offending officers into the custody of its sergeant. The Chancellor released them by Habeas Corpus, and the release was duly recorded. They were again taken, and again released. The Governor shewed the royal instruction, that no protection from suits of law should be allowed to any member of the Senate otherwise than to their persons*. The House remonstrated, and was instantly dissolved: again remonstrated, and was again dissolved. The Governor addressed his third Assembly in a speech filled with the strongest assurances of that paternal affection which rulers so often express, and so seldom feel; but it was found useless, or unnecessary, to demand the usual privileges in the accustomed form, and it was again outrageously dismissed. But there were other reasons which actuated the Governor to these strong measures. Anxious to relieve the island from the machinations of a tyrant, the Assembly had publicly arraigned him upon various charges of neglect, extortion, and

Dec.

A.D. 1765. March.

August.

* See Note, XVI.—In the year 1810, in the affair of General Carmichael, an able pamphlet was compiled by the industry of Mr. Aikman, detailing this case of John Olyphant.

oppression; and he was threatened with an exposure of his conduct to the king. Though his guilt was notorious, he thus found means to avert the blow; the wisdom of the Senate was deceived by his artifice, its honest indignation was cooled by delay, and he covered his guilty conduct by the additional offences of cruelty and fraud. The crime of forgery, the common resource of weakness and cunning, was imputed to him; but it is an accusation hardly to be received without better proof than I have been able to obtain. Intemperate messages had been usual between him and the two branches of the legislature; and in the council it was amusing enough to observe the secret conflicts between flattery and fear. The trembling messengers were dismissed by the Assembly with indignation and contempt; and the gestures, the furious language, of the Governor, when he heard of the proceedings against him there, expressed the conviction of his guilt, and the disorder of his mind. In pursuing the plan of power which he had adopted, he soon found that the annual meeting of the Assembly would be an obstruction to his views, and he conceived a design, therefore to abolish it altogether, or to render it entirely dependant on his own will and pleasure. He accordingly proposed to the lords of trade and plantations, that he should be armed with a privy seal, and with power to draw upon the treasury for the subsistence of the troops, and so have no dependence on the Senate for the supply: he received the power, and plunged so deep in guilt and

infamy, that his only hope was in the destruction of the colonial constitution.

Nor was his animosity confined to the Assembly; the highest officers in the island, both naval and military, had ample reason to despise and distrust him. The acquisition of wealth was his first object, and the country everywhere groaned under the pecuniary exactions of his servants. But when the flame was kindled amongst the liberties of the people, the business of the country was instantly closed, and all hope of reconciliation was at an end. If avarice were not the blindest of the human frailties, the motives of Lyttleton might excite our curiosity, and we might be tempted to inquire with what view he thus violated every principle of humanity and justice, under the certainty of infamy and exposure, and when his schemes counteracted each other. But those who attentively studied his character discovered that he was a man without passions, and, consequently, without talents; and that his feeble, languid, but vicious disposition, rendered him alike incapable of discharging the duties of his station, and of enjoying the fruits of his extortion. The amusement of the stable and kitchen was his principal care: he was a good cook, a skilful whip, an excellent groom, and a most contemptible governor, who sighed to be surpassed in the accomplishments in which he should have blushed to excel.

During four years did Jamaica languish and groan under the dominion of a tyrant, who seemed to unite the unfeeling temper of a stranger,

A.D. 1766.

to the partial resentments of a domestic faction. He practised long, and successfully, his contemptible arts of deceit and delay, but was at last compelled to resign the government to the firm and skilful hands of Elletson, retiring with an ample fortune, and very suspicious integrity. The political and secret transactions of this man, which are an indelible stain upon the annals of Jamaica, might have been concealed perhaps in the impenetrable darkness of his cabinet, had not the debates of an indignant and fearless senate thrown some light into its gloomy recesses. His successor instantly, and in the formal presence of the legislature, expunged the obnoxious record from the Chancery books: July.

—Lyttleton, always hated, and now no longer feared, was again impeached; and the repetition of complaint was amply justified by the recurrence of injustice. Public discontent is always credulous, private malice is often bold; but the whole proceeding of this delicate investigation seems to have been conducted with a reasonable share of wisdom and moderation, although the country was writhing under the injuries of the exposed culprit. It was made evident that the sums which had been painfully collected, or liberally remitted * from the British treasury, for the maintenance of the troops during the suspension of the Assembly, had been intercepted by his avarice: that discharges or exemptions from the military service of the island had been publicly

* See Note XVII.

sold; that when the slaves revolted he remained inactive; while the oppression of the good, and the impunity of the wicked, had introduced all the disorders which afflicted the island *. The Report was printed, and widely circulated; and the resolutions of the senate upon it were temperate and constitutional. Some of them were rejected—but only because they asserted that the Governor, or Commander in Chief, was accountable to his Sovereign alone—"an assertion which implied that he was not amenable to the laws of his country." The principle of this popular rejection appeared, however, to the cautious Elletson as involving the royal prerogative, and he, without further consideration, prorogued the House. Yet the Assembly maintained its ground, and in its next sitting received from the Lieutenant-Governor the "royal approbation of the dutiful, loyal, and discreet conduct observed in the island."

The average number of slaves annually imported to Jamaica now amounted to upwards of sixteen thousand—their total numbers, to a hundred and sixty-seven thousand, while the white population amounted to no more than seventeen thousand. The Abbé Raynal asserts that the total importation from Africa, since the commencement of the slave trade, was nothing short of nine millions—but any authority is better than that of the Abbé Raynal,

* His impeachment may be read at length in the fifth volume of the Journals of Assembly, p. 609, which supplies many facts, and more complaints.

whose total absence of quotations is an unpardonable blemish. Yet certainly the drain upon Africa, which, at the period of the abolition of the slave trade, had been kept open for three hundred and sixty-eight years, and, during the greater part of the time, under the express laws of the most civilized nations upon earth, might have peopled continents, and supplied armies which would have overrun the globe*. It is a lamentable record of the guilt of England, of the misfortunes of Jamaica, and of the weakness of the sons of Africa, who have never been capable of forming any substantial form of government, whose rude ignorance has never invented any effectual weapons of defence or of destruction, and whose obvious inferiority of mental faculties has been thus discovered and abused by the most polished nations of modern Europe.

In the third session under Lieutenant-Governor Elletson, the flames of political discord again broke out within the senate. The Assembly attached to the law for the subsistence of the troops, a clause relating to the public lands, or buildings in the parish of Clarendon; and the council, alarmed by the encroachment, refused assent to the act which raised the necessary supplies, rejecting also, with peevish pertinacity, nine other bills, "without entering either debate, or dissent." It fell, moreover, to the lot of the mild Elletson to be the channel of communication between the mother

A.D. 1767.

* See Note XVIII.

country and the colony, in a matter which endangered his deserved popularity. The reimbursement of the money which Lyttleton had unwarrantably drawn from the British Treasury was required at his hands; but upon his application to the Assembly it was refused, in language resolute and rational. The demand was reiterated during the administration of Sir William Trelawney, and annually repeated during four successive years; but the temperate firmness with which it was resisted showed a consciousness of duty, and of the popular prerogative. An address to the throne exposed, with force and freedom, the infamous policy which led to the embarrassment; and deprecated a demand "which would enable the Governor of Jamaica, in concert with any future wicked or despotic administration in Britain (such was the language of the senate), to intermit Assemblies at pleasure—to suspend their legislative rights; and to burden the people of the island to their latest posterity in the most grievous, arbitrary, and oppressive manner, without bounds, and without remedy *." Such were the rational arguments which at length prevailed with the British Cabinet to relinquish a claim oppressive and unjust; and to confirm those privileges which the Colonial Assembly inherits as an integral part of the constitution.

But the leaven of Lyttleton's administration was still fermenting in the councils of the country. The removal of the seat of government was neither for-

* Journals of Assembly.

gotten nor forgiven; and when it was understood that Sir William Trelawney was nominated Governor of the colony, the hope of purchasing his influence or alarming his fears, before he arrived, induced one party to propose, and a stronger to resist, the provisions of an additional salary with which to greet his landing. Foiled in the factious attempt by the prudent measures of the Speaker, it was as vainly attempted to draw him from the royal residence in Saint Jago, by building a palace for him in Port Royal or Saint Andrew. When he arrived, he proved to each faction that he came not to foment, or to be the victim of discord, but to soothe the passions, and allay the ferment of the colony. The dangerous influence of Knowles's council, who still held their principles with their seats, he found it difficult to controul or counteract: and possessed of no other means of disturbing the harmony of the government, that body again agitated the steril, worn-out subject of privilege, repeatedly embarrassing the proceedings of the other House by the futile rejection of its money bills. Its factious members were not, however, without influence amongst the representatives of the people, whose debates were so disgraceful and tumultuous, that some, whose personal safety was actually endangered there, would have left the house, had it not been proposed to place the keys upon the Speaker's desk. Nor was the Assembly to be always justified by the plea of principle or of right. To usurp a power over peculiar funds, in

whose appropriation the council had undoubtedly an equal right of decision, a clause, applying the surplus money arising from the revenue act of 1728, was artfully inserted, and obstinately adhered to, in a money bill, which, of itself, allowed of no interference. The council, with temper and propriety, at first refused its assent; but the exigencies of the government obliged the executive at length to pass the bill, though not without a severe and merited censure upon the motives which suggested the innovation. The Assembly ventured to inquire, with some asperity, "under whose advice such censure had been passed;" and received a mild and dignified reply from the urbanity of the Governor,

Feb. 23. who reminded them that the funds thus appropriated had once been the genuine fruits of lawful prerogative, and exclusively vested in the crown; and that, therefore, the crown, in liberally relinquishing that prerogative, could but reserve to itself, or to its council, a voice in the appropriation of any overplus which might annually remain. He considered it prudent, however, to

April 10th. convene a new Assembly, which gracelessly hesitated, and tardily yielded to the just rights of the council.

The town of Kingston had, in the mean time, nearly fallen a prey to the machination of the slaves, who had conspired to massacre the white inhabitants, and to burn their dwellings. The fidelity of a negro girl afforded such information as enabled

her master to secure his family from destruction; and a military force surprised an assembly of three hundred armed ruffians prepared to drown the town in blood. A judicial sentence consigned many of them to a painful death: but it could not allay the apprehension that a race of people who possessed the means and the mental ability to organise such a conspiracy as this, might soon assume an attitude which would render the possession of Jamaica useless and insecure. Spain, allured by the continuance of profound tranquillity, again seriously meditated the destruction of the colony. Her secret emissaries excited the slaves to rebellion, placed arms in their hands, and had so contrived the Kingston plot that the flames of the town were to be the signal of a revolt throughout the island. The rational alarms of the inhabitants were seasonably relieved by the advancement of Lieutenant-Colonel Dalling to the rank of lieutenant-governor; a man who had been long in the military command of the island, and whose knowledge of the people against whom he might be called to act, inspired the greatest confidence—the declining health of the Governor rendering it probable that the country would soon be deprived of his active services. The arrival of Sir George Rodney, with a powerful squadron, was also a timely aid, for he drew the attention of the Spaniards from the destruction of Jamaica to the safety of their own shores.

The life of Sir William Trelawney was prolonged

through a few painful months, when the diligence of Colonel Dalling was required to fill the vacant station of a man whose administration had inspired and justified the most unbounded confidence. His power could then attract no flattery, his influence could excite no odium, and the colony wept over his grave with unfeigned sorrow. During a residence of four years he had so steadily held, and so dexterously managed the reins of government, and maintained such an inflexible integrity of conduct, that party almost forgot its resentments, and seemed to leave no contest but who should most promote the ease and happiness of an administration, which gave ease and happiness to all. The person, as well as the mind of Trelawney, had been enriched by nature with her choicest gifts. His birth was noble, his fortune affluent, his manners liberal and affable. In him the love of pleasure was corrected by a sense of dignity; the luxury of his table and palace was hospitable and elegant; but the habits of ease had not deprived him of a capacity for business. He loved the virtues which he possessed, and the talents of which he was destitute: his strength and activity were displayed in every manly exercise; and from his earliest youth he had preserved the vigour of his constitution by a strict adherence to the domestic virtues of temperance and chastity, until he became the victim of tropical disease. A long and tedious illness had never been allowed, for a moment, to interrupt the duties of his high com-

A.D. 1772.

Dec. 11th.

mand; and even those who doubted the propriety of his measures were compelled to acknowledge that he possessed the ability to conceive and the patience to execute the most salutary designs, without being checked either by the prejudices of education, or by the clamours of the multitude. The apprehensions which his declining health gave rise to, and the universal regret which the unfortunate event inspired, are panegyrics far removed beyond the suspicion of flattery. After recording the vices and follies of former Governors, it is pleasing to repose for a moment on the character of one conspicuous by the qualities of humanity, justice, temperance, and fortitude; to contemplate one affable in his palace, pious in the church, impartial on the seat of judgment, and successful in an arduous administration. A thousand guineas expended on a public and splendid funeral, was not of so much value as the tributary tears of thousands of his subjects; but the mark of respect did honour to the community, and wiped off the illiberal aspersion which ignorance or malevolence has frequently thrown upon the colonists, representing them as a people impatient of subjection, averse to all government, and with whom a mild and virtuous administration always meets with disappointment and disregard. The name of Sir William Trelawney has been perpetuated in the fair and fruitful district, which, during his administration, was divided from the extensive parish of St. James.

## Chapter XIII.

The Dependencies of Jamaica.—Discovery of Nicaragua and Yucatan.—Annals of the Mosquito Shores—Of Honduras.

[A.D. 1502—1827.]

About the year 1502, a ray of historic light breaks upon the dark shores of Nicaragua and Yucatan. It would be difficult, nor is it necessary, to pursue the early discoverers through the unknown regions and marvellous adventures in which the Spanish historians have engaged them; but if the testimony of Herrera, of Benzoni, and of Columbus, be allowed to preponderate over the bare assertion of the arrogant and erroneous Abbé Raynal, the history of these regions will add to the long list of *fertile* provinces which Castilian perfidy and avarice laid waste.* Ten years after the arrival of "the monsters of the ocean" amongst the astonished natives of the Isles, these remote shores were still in happy ignorance of the approach of those who were, in ten years more, to exterminate their race. But when Columbus, on his fourth voyage, issued from the port of Yaquimo in search of the Western continent,† the first land he encountered was an island, which the Indians called

A.D. 1502.

* See Note XIX. † See Note XX.

Guanaja,* but which his brother afterwards named the Isle of Pines. Approaching the headland of Hibueras,† he overtook a canoe containing twenty-five men, with as many women and children, on its passage from Yucatan, and laden with the rude merchandise of their native shores. The inventory is curious, if correct; and the authority of Herrera may not be questioned. Blankets and carpets of plaited cotton and palm leaves; wooden swords of adamantine hardness; agate knives; *copper* hatchets; *bells; medals;* crucibles, and a species of nut hitherto unknown, but which the Indians called *cacao*, and which supplied the use of current coin.

Columbus allowed the traders to pursue their course, after having, by force or persuasion, obtained the assistance of an old man as an interpreter. His first inquiry, as usual, was for gold. His signs were comprehended and answered; and it was indicated that at "Caravero," in the south, that metal was abundant; that the people wore crowns of it on their heads, bracelets on their arms, and bars upon their feet; that it supplied the common material for tables, chairs, and chests; and that the mantles of the men, and the baracans of the females, were alike the produce of the precious ore. It is probable, however, that the ready ingenuity of the Indian was here displayed in the mode of drawing the attention of the Spaniards from his own country, and that he soon discovered the most efficacious way of

* Herrera, lib. v. c. 5. † See Note XXI.

doing so. He was shown some coral, spice, and pearls; and the delighted Castilians eagerly drew from his real or pretended knowledge of them, the most favourable assurances of their future success. His information was, indeed, in perfect unison with the prejudices of the Admiral, who now conceived his hypothesis beyond all doubt confirmed. He already considered China within his view—that the shoaly ocean around him displayed the immediate neighbourhood of the promised Caravero, which could be no other than some province or city of the Great Khan, and that ten days' sail, at most, would bear him thence in safety to the Ganges.* He was persuaded that the kingdoms of Tartary and China were situated, with regard to himself, as Tortosa is with respect to Fontarabia, two towns of Spain, in the opposite provinces of Biscay and Catalonia; and, occupied with this idea, he unfortunately ceased to pursue a course which, in a few hours, would have crowned his utmost wishes by the discovery of the peninsula of Yucatan, and the golden provinces of Mexico.

The first land which he encountered was the Cape, which he named Casinas, from a species of apple

* In Marco Polo, and the Oriental geographers, the names of Cathay and Mangi distinguish the northern and southern empires, which, from A.D. 1234 to 1279, were those of the Great Khan, and of the Chinese. The search of Cathay, after China had been found, excited and misled our navigators of the sixteenth century, in their attempts to discover the north-east passage.

abundant there, and so called by the natives:—in looser geography this headland is confounded with Cape Cameron. The Indians liberally supplied the wants, and even the desires, of their extraordinary visiters: and the haughty Castilians were somewhat embarrassed by the singular politeness of the Cacique, who added to his other favours the gift, or at least the loan, of a sufficient number of beautiful and obsequious damsels. Columbus found every where a fruitful land and a friendly people—a multitude speaking different languages, naked, or clothed only in a species of camisole, and their limbs, of exquisite symmetry, branded with the figures of lions, stags, and rats. Some wore caps of red or white cotton; and others had their faces painted or stained in stripes of white and black. Love and hunting were the labours of their life; and the name he gave their shores, *Costa de Oreja*, was derived from one of their most expressive beauties, the division of the ear. They possessed abundance of corn, fish, and fruit, which they readily exchanged for European trinkets; their country appeared everywhere verdant and beautiful; the pine, the chestnut, and the palm, afforded the deepest shade,—the fervour of a tropical sun was softened or intercepted by the constant but gentle breezes from the ocean; and the fertility of the soil, rather than the industry of the natives, supplied their rustic plenty. Erected, or rather concealed, in the depth of forests, or on the banks of rivers, or on the edge of morasses,

their huts might be rather compared to the architecture of the beaver, than to the habitations of a human being. They paid, indeed, a voluntary obedience to their Cacique, and a marked respect to age and valour; but each tribe or village existed as a separate republic, and all must be persuaded where none could be compelled.

With the usual ceremonies, Columbus took possession of the land; and then, against a heavy sea and a strong tide, he reached and doubled a cape, from whence the coast turned sharply to the south, promising an easy access to the shores he sought. He therefore named the headland Gracias a Dios, and under easy sail bent his course to Caravero, the promised land of luxury and gold.

August 17th.

Sept. 12th.

In the year 1509, the province of Honduras was granted to Nicuessa, whose territory extended from the gulf d'Uraba, to Cape Gracias a Dios: but the peninsula of Yucatan still remained unnoticed and unknown; nor was it visited by any European until fifteen years after Columbus had left its neighbourhood, and as many of Castilian cruelty had depopulated the islands, rendering it necessary to seek, on other shores, the strength thus lavishly consumed.

A. D. 1518. Diego Velasquez at length sought land to the westward of Cape Antonio in Cuba; and twenty-one days brought him to a country whose inhabitants, using the exclamation of surprise, *cotoche!* gave the Cape the name it bears. He found them

armed, intelligent, and determined to oppose his landing. Coasting still onward to the west, he encountered a town which the Indians called Quimpech (Campeché), and discovered there religious temples adorned with large white crosses, while incense of the native copal burnt before the door; but within they were polluted with human victims, and idols which they addressed with songs and music. Some faint traditions, and some imperfect signs of Christian worship, are said to have been found in various parts of the Mexican and Peruvian empires—if a fable, how credulous the historians!—if a fact, how careless their commentators!* The deductions of reason, however, produce a result absolutely asserted in the Sacred Volume, that all modes of false worship emanated from Shinar; and thus the reasons of that variety, which diversifies the practice of religion amongst different nations, may be reduced within a very narrow compass. The apostacy began on those extensive plains which rendered infamous the chef-d'œuvre of ancient architecture; and the seed of every new religion was thence scattered throughout the world. Each ambitious and

* It is a curious fact, that the quadrangular pyramid was the symbol of immortality, not only amongst the Egyptians, but with the Indians, the Chinese, and in the extreme regions of the west. The high altar of the temple of Vitzliputzli, in Mexico, was a pyramid, as well as that of the temple of Nankin. The serpent, or snake, was also an object of veneration amongst the Indians of New Spain, as it once was amongst the savages of Europe, whence the name *Eur-Op*, the serpent of the sun.

enterprising individual, whose abilities enabled him to collect a party, would set off with his followers, east or west, as his inclinations might lead; and, forming a colony at no great distance from the place of departure, would, as its ostensible king and priest, deliver, *ex cathedrâ*, his own speculative opinions on the subject of religion, which would be adopted as the system of the newly planted tribe; while a race of sincere proselytes would gradually be multiplied by the education of the rising generation. When the population of the colony thus formed became too abundant for the settlement, new migrations would take place, moving to a greater distance from Shinar, each family under its respective leader, whose religious tenets would, doubtless, possess some peculiarities. Thus the sentiments of mankind, as it separated more widely, would diverge, by insensible degrees, from the true mode of worship, until, at length, the great nations would be formed in every part of the earth, by the union of many small tribes, as policy or conquest might prevail, each practising a religion of its own; which, though differing essentially from that of the rest of mankind, would unequivocally point out a common origin.*

* I have here adopted the language of a reverend and highly talented writer of the present day, of whom it is too little to say, that his works have illustrated the science of Free-Masonry, and vindicated his mysterious subject from the sneers of erudition, and the irreverent sallies of wit. (Oliver's 'Antiquities of Free-Masonry.' 8vo. 1823.) An excellent dissertation on

The natives of Campeché placed burning branches of the copal tree between themselves and the advancing Spaniards, intimating that, unless the enemy withdrew before the torches were burnt out, they must take the consequences of their own temerity. A desperate engagement was the result; the Spaniards were overpowered by numbers, Grigalva was wounded in the face by an arrow, and they returned to Puerto de Carenas, the Havanna. The same enterprising commander afterwards landed on the island of Cozumel: it was on the Feast of the Cross, and the day of discovery was perpetuated in the name of Santa Cruz. If the character of the natives were enfeebled by peace, or climate, the approach of the Spaniards, whose fame had already spread terror through the provinces around, seemed to kindle some sparks of military ardour. A female native of Jamaica, flying from the exterminating search of the Spaniards there, had lately arrived at Cozumel, driven across in a small canoe, the only survivor of the perilous attempt;* and she had described, in glowing language, the floating monsters whose approach now terrified the gazing multitudes. They instantly armed for their protection, and a few discharges of artillery commenced the devastation

the origin and migrations of nations is also to be found in the 'Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions,' tom. xviii. p. 48—71. It is seldom that the antiquarian and the philosopher are so happily blended.

* See Note XXII.

which their tribe was soon to undergo. Resistance, if it cannot avert, must increase the miseries of conquest, and conquest never appeared more dreadful or destructive than in the New World. Where the Spaniards experienced resistance they gave no quarter; the boast of the ferocious Hun, that the grass never grew on the spot which his horse had trod, might indeed be applied to them; and the death of a Castilian was expiated only by the extinction of a tribe. Careless of the distinctions of age or sex, they employed every species of outrage and excess, upon the few captives whose lives they spared, to make them confess their hidden wealth; and the crowd of naked savages who rushed from the woods and vallies of the interior, to satiate their revenge on the iron-clad tyrants who had slain their children, was easily checked by the thunder of the European arms. The banner of the Cross was sometimes displayed to give their conquests the character of conversion to the Christian cause, but they spread the flames of war rather than the light of religion; the forms of legal division did not moderate or disguise their brutal rapine; their followers dispersed themselves over the ruined provinces without order or controul, and each victorious robber, according to his wants, his avarice, or his strength, measured with his sword the extent of his new inheritance.

The discoverers followed the track of Velasquez through the Bay which he had named Boca de Terminos, and entered a river called by the Indians

*Tobasco*, where they exchanged presents with the natives—Herrera affirms, "golden shields for a crimson velvet coat, or a linen shirt." A.D. 1526. Montego of Salamanca and Narvaez of Cuellar were at length commissioned to colonise, under the Spanish crown, the islands of Cozumel and Yucatan, for it was still unknown that Yucatan was part of the continent; while Salcedo, the nephew of Ovando, was nominated to the government of Honduras, a province which, in the division of New Spain, was afterwards comprehended in the Audience of Guatimala; bounded on the north by its own bay, to the west by Guatimala and Vera Paz, on the south by Nicaragua, and on the east by the Mosquito shore. Correal, the celebrated Spanish traveller, supposes himself placed at the extremity of Yucatan, for the purpose of measuring the extent of the Gulf of Honduras. "Il y a cent lieues" says he, "de cette pointe à Rio Grande, dont le cap fait l'autre pointe; et dans l'intervalle on laisse Punta de las Mugeres, et la Baie de l'Ascension. Rio Grande est entre seize et dix-sept dégrés de latitude du nord. De Punta de Higueras, qui est au fond du golfe, et qui sépare l'Yucatan de Honduras, pays habité par les Indiens libres il y a trente lieues à l'est, jusqu'au cap de Tres Puntas; et de ce cap on compte trente autres lieues jusqu'au Puerto de Cavallos, ou Naco, qui est le nom de sa ville, située sur la rivière de Sol. San Pedro n'est qu'à une journée de Naco, dans une plaine bordée des mon-

tagnes; et Rio d'Allua, Rio Baxo, et la ville de Gracias a Dios ne sont pas êloignés de San Pedro. De Puerto Cavallos au port qui se nomme Trionfo de la Cruz, il y a trente-deux lieues. On rencontre Truxillo à cinquante lieues de ce dernier port; et la côte tourne ensuite au nord-est jusqu'au Cap de Honduras, qui est proprement l'entrée du golfe, du côté de la province dont il porte le nom. Cependant il reste de-là vingt lieues, jusqu'au Rio Grande, et à Cap de Camaron, vers lesquels la côte court à l'est;" and it is between this point and that of Yucatan that Correal reckons a hundred leagues. From thence to Cape Gracias a Dios, which is in the fourteenth degree of latitude, there are sixty leagues, and there ends the coast of Honduras, and commences that of Nicaragua.

In the province of Honduras the Spaniards founded the towns of Truxillo, San Pedro, Puerto de Cavallos, Naco, le Trionfo de la Cruz, and Valladolid, the capital, and the see of a Bishop. Gage adds to the number St. Thomas de Castille, and an Indian village which served as an entrepôt between Guatimala and the shipping on the bay. The last province soon attracted the conquerors by the peculiar richness of its indigo, and the neighbouring territories were quickly drained of their native inhabitants to supply the loss of those who fell in the pernicious manufacture of the dye. Many of the towns were deserted before they were finished, and the mines of Honduras were soon exhausted, or forgotten, though not before

they had been the tombs of a million of the imprisoned Indians. The lands were, therefore, left uncultivated, and the rapid progress of vegetation soon turned the verdant gardens into impenetrable forests. Yet even the rapacity of the conquerors could not drain its natural fertility; the blood of its children seemed but to add fresh vigour to the soil, which still produced abundance of wild maize, and fed innumerable herds of cattle, which had increased from the Spanish stock.

Nicaragua was called the paradise of Mahomet by its discoverers, so beauteous was its aspect, and so rich its mines. The revolution of Mexico placed the subject provinces at the disposal of the conquerors, who comprehended them all under the title of New Spain, and added to the enormous dominion which extended over more than ninety thousand square miles, the vast territories reaching from Darien to Guatimala. The trembling Indians, apprised of the character of their approaching invaders, destroyed their plantations of Indian corn, resigned the fairest and most fertile lands to the rapacity of strangers, and relinquished, with a sigh, the inheritance of their fathers. The appearance, the strength, the rapid motions, and the implacable cruelty of the Spaniards, were felt, and dreaded, and magnified, by the flying natives, who beheld their fields and villages consumed with flames, and deluged by indiscriminate slaughter. The only tribe which attempted to maintain its ground was that which inhabited the eastern

shore, to which the swarms of *culex pipiens*, the mosquito gnat, which infest the shaded swamps, and stagnant waters, lent the name it bears*. Their just indignation had, at first, been mute and passive, but they suddenly rose with unanimous and irresistible fury; and, after a few unequal encounters, were compelled to fly before the thunder of the Spanish cannon to the more defensible rocks of Cape Gracias a Dios, where, surrounded on three sides by the ocean, and on the fourth protected by an impenetrable morass, they braved the efforts of an enemy which to this hour has never been able to obtain a footing amongst a patriotic and a warlike people.

Although the theatre of so much slaughter, the Nicaragua, Honduras, and Yucatan have never, from the age of their discovery, been of any value to the European conquerors, either on account of the richness of their ores, or the fertility of their lands. The little attention which has been paid to them has been chiefly attracted by the inexhaustible stores of mahogany and logwood, whose growth exceeds that in any other districts of America. So little of their internal history has, however, been handed down to us through the dark ages of the Spanish dominion, that the few facts we can glean by the glimmering and suspicious light which the corsairs have afforded us, serve rather as the milestones of their existence, than as a detail of events connected with their fate.

* Œxmelin calls them the Moustique or Mousquite Indians.

The Bay of Honduras reaches, as we have seen, from Cape Cotoche to Cape Honduras—from where the coast comprehending Cape Gracias a Dios, and extending between five and six hundred miles to the northern mouth of the river flowing from the Nicaragua Lake, is known by the name of the Mosquito shore. Within these limits lie the settlements to which, as the dependencies of Jamaica, our attention is called. The jurisdiction which the term would imply is so imperfectly defined, that it has seldom been exercised or acknowledged, except, perhaps, when the settlers have wished to plead it in bar of the authority claimed by their respective superintendents. On such occasions they have admitted the superior jurisdiction of the Governor of Jamaica, and have sometimes applied to him for commissions and instructions. By the treaty signed in London, on the 14th July, 1786, the whole of these territories were, however, ceded to Spain, and the British settlers occupied their stations only by sufferance.

The corsairs, who swarmed around the Greater Antilles, when they had swept those seas of all their wealth, frequently sought their prey upon the shores of Honduras and Yucatan. A.D. 1576. Truxillo was taken, pillaged, and inhabited, by an Englishman of the name of Barker, who built a vessel there, and with it retired, before the Spaniards had recovered from their astonishment at an enterprise so bold. Newport, another 1591. British adventurer, succeeded him, captured four

caravels, six tons of quicksilver, sixteen of sack, with several bales of silk and pearls, and returned to England through the Bahama passage.

A.D. 1593.

From off the coast of Spain part of the Earl of Cumberland's fleet proceeded to the West Indies, captured, on their passage to Honduras, several Jamaica merchantmen, laden with hides and *canna fistula*, and after taking many ships filled with logwood and sarsaparilla, returned to Plymouth with the Spanish Admiral in chains. It was suspected that the deep Gulf of Honduras might lead, through the Rio Dolce, to the South sea; and Sir Anthony Shirley, after his descent upon Jamaica, proceeded to Truxillo and Puerto de Cavallos, to ascertain the fact. But he found the country so poor, desolate, and unhealthy, that he hastened back to Cuba. About twenty years afterwards, when Spain found that her monastic institutions were the chief hold which she retained in the west, the king conferred a revenue of two hundred piastres on the Bishopric of Valladolid amongst many other sees, upon condition of receiving the tenths in gold. That see was, however, soon after added, with the suffragan abbots of Jamaica, to the archbishopric of Saint Domingo.

1597.

1618.

Gage visited the shores of Honduras after having resided twelve years in the neighbouring provinces. "I remained," says he, "for a while in Coban, and in the towns about, until such time as the ships came to the gulfe, whither I went

1630.

with Moran to buy wines, oyle, iron, cloth, and such things as the Cloister wanted for the present. At which time there being a frigate ready to depart to Truxillo, some occasions drawing Moran thither, I took ship with him. We staid not much above a week in that port, which is a weak one, as the English and Hollanders taking of it can witnesse; but presently we thought of returning back to Guatimala by land, through the country of *Comayagua*, commonly called Honduras. This is a woody and a mountainous country, very bad and inconvenient for travellers, and besides very poore; there the commodities are hides, canna fistula, and zarzaparilla, and such want of bread, that about Truxillo they make use of what they call Cassave, which is a dry root, that being eaten dry doth choak, and, therefore, is soaked in broath, water, wine, or chocolate, so that it may go down. Within the country, and especially about the city of Comayagua, which is a bishop's seat, though a small place of five hundred inhabitants at the most, there is more store of maiz, by reason of some Indians which are in towns few and small. I found this country one of the poorest in all America. The chief place in it for health and good living is the valley which is called Gracias a Dios; there are some rich farms of cattle and wheat: but because it lieth as near to the countrey of Guatimala, as to Comayagua, and on this side the waies are better than on that, therefore more of that wheat is transported to Guatimala, and to the townes about

it, than to Comayagua or Truxillo. From Truxillo to Guatimala there are between fourscore and an hundred leagues, which we travelled by land, not wanting in a barren countrey neither guides nor provision; for the poore Indians thought neither their personal attendance nor any thing that they enjoyed too good for us*.

Willis, the notorious Buccaneer, was the first Englishman who settled on the banks of the river to which he gave his name. The Spaniards called it Walis, † and the corrupting influence of time has softened it to Belize. The ex-governor of Tortuga sought his retreat on the shores and isles of Yucatan, where a multitude of his subjects or friends, who preferred a distant fortune to a narrow home, quickly joined him. Had the life of Willis been more worthy of a Briton,‡ he might have been encouraged by a resemblance between his own fate, and that of the Venetians expelled by Attila. They fled from their pursuers to the neighbouring islands of the Adriatic, and were compared by Cassiodorus to water-fowl who had fixed their nests upon the bosom of the deep. A people whose habitations, like those of Willis and his followers, might be doubtfully assigned to the earth or water, soon became alike familiar with the two elements; and the demands of avarice succeeded to those

A.D. 1638.

* Gage's Survey of the West Indies, p. 159.

† See Note XXIII.

‡ Annals of Jamaica, vol. i.—Notes, p. 408.

of necessity. As they were more ambitious of spoil than glory, they seldom attacked any fortified towns, or engaged in the open field; but the celerity of their motions enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and assault the most distant objects which attracted their desires; and by a secure but laborious navigation, they soon reaped a rich harvest from the Spanish settlements. To annoy the Spaniards was their trade, their exercise, their glory, and their virtue. Impatient of their narrow limits, they grasped their arms, ascended their vessels, and explored every coast which promised an abundant spoil. The various troops of pirates and adventurers who fought under the same standard, were insensibly united in a permanent society, at first of rapine, and afterwards of government; and a stream of daring volunteers incessantly flowed from the French and British isles. Their vessels, which were quickly multiplied by conquest, extended their excursions, or intercepted the trade upon the ocean;—and the marriage which Venice still celebrates with the Adriatic might, with the same propriety, be commemorated by the grateful settlers in the bay of Belize. After a few years of successful plunder, they followed the more peaceful occupation of logwood chipping, to which their situation was peculiarly adapted: for the exhaustless forests of the precious dye covered a country, through which a navigable river flowed to an obscure coast, which was protected by the intricacies of innumerable isles and shoals, where the dex-

trous could easily elude pursuit. The advantages of the settlement soon became better known to the British, and an object of jealousy, therefore, to the Spanish court: so that for more than half a century it was the fruitful subject of repeated treaties, and the constant source of contention between the courts of London and Madrid; the former desirous of profiting by the trade, and by the advantages of a position which at once laid open the hidden sources of the Spanish treasure, the latter fearful of admitting an enterprising people so near to them. Repeated attempts were made to derive the Colony from the country—but they all failed against a people who possessed the sea, and, on land, could endure hardships under which the drowsy Spaniards sunk.

The Indians of the Mosquito shore were the faithful allies of the settlers at Belize—they soon excelled in the use of fire-arms, and the acquirement gave life and energy, to their natural hatred of the Spanish name. But it was not until more than twenty years after the colony of Willis had been established, that the value of the logwood and mahogany brought any great accession of strength to his people. At first a place of refuge and retirement, they impatiently compared the slow returns of labour with the successful rapine and liberal rewards of their former life; and the logwood trade was again almost abandoned for the more liberal profession of a pirate. Great Britain had been too well supplied with dye-woods by her privateers, and at

the expense of Spanish life and labour, to risk her own resources in the preservation or enlargement of the colony; and it was not until her dauntless mariners had swept the timid Spaniards from the ocean, that the want of employment added much to the establishment of Belize. Another settlement was then formed near Cape Cotoche, upon the coast of Yucatan, by those who had too much independence to join the settlement of Willis—but the scarcity of logwood soon drove them to the Laguna de Terminos, in the deep and sheltered bay of Campeche.

The Buccaneers*, in the mean time, were not idle. The notorious L'Olonnois, who had escaped the vengeance of the Spaniards by smearing himself with gore, and lying amongst the slain in Campeche, quickly retaliated upon them at Puerto de Cavallos, where, in conjunction with the pirates of Belize, he took their ships, and burnt their town, after committing an unprovoked and barbarous outrage upon the Indians of the Mosquito shore. The representations of the Spanish Court at length prevailed so far as to disgrace Sir Henry Morgan, and to check the British corsairs; and its subjects immediately took advantage of the circumstance to be, in their turn, the aggressors. They dislodged the English settlers from the Laguna de Terminos; until the fugitives rallied, returned, expelled their invaders, and

A.D. 1665.

A.D. 1680.

* See Note XXIV.

increased their trade. The Spaniards were generally undecided in their operations, which were capriciously framed, and cruelly executed, with an ignorance of real difficulties, and a timorous neglect of every favourable opportunity: yet they were once successful in repelling a formidable attempt on the city of Merida, which was attacked by a force of a thousand desperate marauders, who failed, and withdrew. Still, however, they were excluded from the Mosquito shore by the warlike and vindictive Indians, who neither by threats, nor promises, could be induced to permit a Spaniard to approach them. As soon as the Duke of Albemarle arrived in Jamaica, these Indians sought the protection of the British crown. They represented that, in the reign of Charles the First, the Earl of Warwick, by virtue of letters of reprisal, possessed himself of several islands in the West Indies, particularly of Providence, near their own territory: that the Earl was therefore desirous of a friendly correspondence with them, and at length prevailed on them to let him take to England the son of their king, leaving as an hostage his own friend and companion in arms, Colonel Morris. The Indian Prince remained three years in England; during which period his father died, and the patriotic youth, returning to his native land, was so impressed with the idea that the sovereign of Great Britain could govern his people with greater advantage to

A.D. 1685.

A.D. 1687.

them than he could himself, that he resigned his crown, and with all his tribe swore eternal allegiance to the kings of England. Sir Hans Sloane was present when the Indians presented this memorial to the Governor of Jamaica, and has recorded it*; he heard them crave the protection which their allegiance merited; and during a hundred and forty years, they have maintained a strict and uninterrupted alliance with Great Britain, under whose sovereignty they are now confirmed by treaty†.

In the year 1741, a regular establishment of troops, under the command of a superintendent, was fixed amongst them, and a constitution subsisted under the auspices of the British government till the peace with Spain stipulated that all fortifications in the Bay of Honduras, and other places in the territory of Spain, should be demolished. Without considering that the Mosquito shore was neither in the Bay of Honduras, nor formed any part of the Spanish territory, the fortifications there were dismantled, the troops removed, and the unfortunate Indians were abandoned to their own resources, and left to protect themselves, as they could, against a power from which they had every thing to dread, and by which, but for the subsequent protection of England, they would have been long since exterminated.

* History of Jamaica, vol. i. p. 76.

† See, in 'Almon's Parliamentary Register,' the elaborate State Paper of Bryan Edwards, the historian of Jamaica. 1774.

The blood of the Mosquito Indians has been mixed with that of Africa, by the wreck of a slave ship upon their coast*. The negroes had risen upon the crew, butchered them without mercy or consideration, and found themselves masters of a vessel an hundred leagues from land, and without the power of managing a sail. The ship drifted upon Cape Gracias a Dios, and in the days of Œxmelin, two hundred of these negroes were still in servitude to the Indians. But some pure Indians yet remain, and their conduct affords the most favourable picture of their native disposition. Mild, good-tempered, and easy, their modesty, good faith, and gratitude, engage the protection, and ensure the regard, which is necessary to shield them from the machinations of the Samboes, whose mixture of negro blood has inoculated the characteristic crimes of treachery, revenge, and deceit.

Two hundred of these Indians were in the pay of Jamaica in the year 1737; and under their own officers acquitted themselves with industry and fidelity, in the suppression of the rebellion; and in the year 1780, the immortal Nelson visited their shores from Port Royal, and carried a considerable body of them upon the expedition against Saint Juan.

* Œxmelin, p. 243. Sir Thomas Medyford, the Governor of Jamaica in the year 1671, transmitted to Charles II. an account of the right by which his Majesty's subjects are settled on the Mosquito shore, and on the coast of Yucatan. See Report by Board of Trade in 1717.

But their fidelity to the British nation, though still inviolate, has often been put to a severe test. They not only suffered by the privateers, who often decoyed them on board their vessels, and sold them as slaves; but the trade which was carried on between Jamaica and the Darien and San Blas Indians, often approached the boundaries of the Mosquito shore; and in 1741 it was carried to such extent, that an act of the Jamaica Assembly prohibited the inhuman traffic, not however interfering with the property already obtained. In 1764, Governor Lyttleton took more effectual means to put a stop to the infamous practice, by issuing a proclamation ordering the magistracy of Jamaica to make returns of such Indian slaves*, and to prosecute the offenders; by which means many were restored to liberty, and no more were brought to Jamaica—though some still remained carefully concealed, whose descendants may yet be traced by their long hair and features. But the local edict put no stop to the traffic on the main; and in the year 1775, the Mosquito king sent an embassy to London, to seek protection against those who continually harassed and carried off his subjects.

Orders were instantly transmitted to the Governor of Jamaica to take the most effectual means of securing them from future outrage. The cruel policy of the Spaniards would frequently incite the Indians

* Journals of Assembly, vol. v. p. 379.

of the interior to attack the peaceful, though unconquerable natives of the Mosquito shore, who consequently made many captives in their own defence; and of these some were retained as slaves, and some were taken as wives, while others were sold to the English settlers on the shore. The release of these captives came also within the instructions of the Earl of Dartmouth to Sir Basil Keith; and he sent a new superintendent there to supersede the one against whom complaints had been exhibited for permitting such a trade. A council of twelve was consequently elected at Black River, to make regulations and determine appeals, under the authority of the Governor of Jamaica; and from such council indentured servants, Indians, negroes, and people of colour, were excluded, as also from all service either military or civil. The Woolwa and Cookara tribes, who had entered into an offensive alliance with the Spaniards, were conciliated by the friendly measures of the new superintendent: all Indians offered for sale were declared free, and a penalty was inflicted on the vendor; while those held in slavery were correctly registered, though they were still considered as legal and transferable property.

When the British settlers were compelled to evacuate the Mosquito shore, eleven years afterwards, under a false interpretation of the treaty with Spain, it was ascertained that no infringement of these regulations had taken place; but the Indians already in slavery followed their expelled owners to

Honduras; and, although there they and their descendants have known only the shadow of slavery without the substance, and were the active protectors of their masters' properties and lives, in the memorable attack upon Belize, they afforded to a late superintendent an unsubstantial plea to disturb the peace of the settlement, and to stigmatise a most humane and industrious people.

Every variety of the animal and vegetable kingdom, for use or beauty, for food or luxury, has been liberally bestowed upon the Mosquito shore, which is well watered and capable of producing, in the utmost perfection, whatever is peculiar to the tropics. The indigo is a native plant; the sugar-cane arrives at its full growth and perfection; and the mahogany and sarsaparilla cannot be excelled. The rivers abound with fish, and the most valuable turtle-shell is plentiful upon the coast. The principal settlements are at Black River, about twenty-six leagues east of Cape Honduras—at Cape Gracias a Dios, and at Blewfields, seventy leagues to the southward of the Cape; but, with the exception of a few traders from Kingston, the intercourse with the British colonies is now rare and precarious; the habits of the people are grown idle and dissolute; and their dependence on Jamaica is scarcely known or acknowledged.

The settlement of Belize, on the contrary, has increased in respectability and extent: the refinements of European luxury have cleared the woods around

of the most valuable timber, which is now familiar to our sight in the palace and in the cottage; and the mahogany-tree*, which first attracted the attention of the curious alone, is now the object of its staple trade.

The British settlers throughout the Spanish main laboured under very great disadvantages from the ninth article of the Assiento, which fixed the value of slaves in the isles no higher than three hundred piastres each, but left it unlimited in New Spain, where the company was encouraged to exact the highest prices. A branch of the Assiento was also farmed by the South Sea directors to Cathcart and Blackwood, two Scotch adventurers†, at forty pieces of eight for every negro they imported; and they annually sent four or five ships with a limited supply. But it was the warehouses of Kingston which supplied their avarice, and the profits of an illicit trade. They bartered the manufactures of British industry for the logwood which the Spaniards cut, silencing the royal officers of the province by a bribe of twelve per cent. The export of logwood thus obtained during the last year of the Campeche settlement, was no less than 5863 tons; and the destruction of the colony had, therefore, a most injurious effect upon the trade of Jamaica. It was finally extinguished by the Spaniards, when they destroyed the town, and captured sixty-two sail of

A.D. 1701.

A.D. 1716.

* See Note XXV. † See Note XXVI.

merchantmen, which had discharged their British cargoes, and were loading with logwood to return. This act of aggression, although almost authorized by the contraband trade carrying on there, was still in contravention of the treaty of 1670, which "confirmed to Great Britain a right to the Laguna de Terminos, and the parts adjacent, in the province of Yucatan; those places having been actually in possession of British subjects through right of sufferance, or indulgence*." The same right or liberty had also been granted absolutely by the treaty of Utrecht, in the year 1713. But the facility with which the British cruizers could anywhere make a descent upon those shores, and bear away the piles of logwood, which they were certain of finding ready cut, and placed there by the labour of the Spaniards, rendered the loss of Campeché of little consequence, except to the merchants of Kingston, who were deprived of their lucrative but illegal market. The settlers, driven from the shores of Yucatan, sought a refuge on the eastern coast, and were received at Belize, where their numbers were recruited by swarms of adventurers, desirous of exercising the profession of robbery, under the more honourable name of conquest; and they daily sallied forth to revenge the insult by their depredations on the Spanish shores and settlements.

* Reports of the Board of Trade—anno 1716.

This species of warfare was obstinately persisted in during forty years, with desperate valour and various success; and until the Spaniards were roused from their inactivity; when they availed themselves of their superior geographical knowledge of the interior, and, collecting a force of fifteen hundred men, advanced upon Belize from Peten, a town two hundred miles to the westward of it. A dark and almost impervious path conducted them in their course; they captured a few industrious woodcutters, and proceeded to within three days' journey of the British settlement. But these were to be three days of battle, for they had to encounter the determined valour of enemies who despised and detested them. A few trees were hastily thrown across the path, and behind them eight men and a small fieldpiece kept their force in check for fifty hours. The greater part of the settlers at Belize were pursuing their lucrative profession on the deep; but those who had embraced a life of tranquillity and labour, deserted their occupations at the first sound of the trumpet, and eagerly resumed the weapons which they had reluctantly laid down. Their utmost force did not, however, exceed an hundred and twenty men, *principally slaves;* and when they were told that their enemies were more than ten times that number, "the thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed," was the concise reply: they flew to the succour of their gallant

A.D. 1754.

friends, repelled the invaders, and rejoiced in the discovery of their own strength, and the fidelity of their slaves.

In their peaceful possession of the settlement, the treaty of Paris afterwards so far confirmed them, that the King of Spain guaranteed the security of their property, and their unmolested occupation of cutting wood, upon condition that all A.D. 1763. fortifications in the Bay of Honduras, erected by British subjects, should be immediately demolished; and the coast was deprived of all artificial means of defence from Cape Cotoche to the Nicaragua river. Sir William Burnaby arranged the territorial boundaries; and, with the assistance of the celebrated Captain Cook, instituted a code A.D. 1765. of civil laws for the government of the colonists. But acts of mutual provocation and revenge still inflamed the jealousy, and roused the vigilance, of the national enemies, who were so closely settled. Every man has a right to defend, by force of arms, his person and his possessions; to repel, or even to prevent, the violence of his enemies, and to extend his hostilities to a reasonable measure of satisfaction and retaliation. But the deep and dangerous question, how far the faith of treaties should be observed when it becomes incompatible with public interest, has been too often agitated between the Courts of London and Madrid; and, by the British colonists in the West Indies, it was now, perhaps, hoped, that

the nation would redeem its former pusillanimity by a splendid act of public perfidy. The Marquis d'Almadovar, after expatiating on the exploits of his monarch's arms, with much vanity, and some truth, concluded a very fair remonstrance to the English government in these remarkable words:—"The King, my master, finds himself under the disagreeable necessity of making use of all the means which the Almighty has intrusted him with, to obtain that justice which he has solicited so often in vain." In the consideration of a subject which may now be examined with impartiality, we shall be compelled to allow, indeed, that the trade which enriched Jamaica, and all the British Indies, in those days, was a flagrant breach of national faith; and that the insults offered by the English navy, though too often retaliated with wanton cruelty, were numerous and notorious. Nor was the prevailing complaint against that inordinate arrogance of Spain, which would appropriate the exclusive dominion of the Western ocean, sufficient to dissolve the natural obligations of justice. The Court of London parried the attack of the ambassador with art and dexterity; assuring him that, with respect to the Bay of Honduras, no complaints had been specifically made; and that, as to the insults offered to his master's flag, its presumption might sometimes authorise them. England was thus made a doubtful friend, and Spain became an irreconcileable enemy.

A.D. 1779.

The tameness of the Spaniards at first invited a repetition of injuries, but they soon roused themselves to deeds of vengeance, and their enormities far exceeded the usual bounds of national retaliation. They had vainly imagined that they could achieve without resistance, or delay without danger, the extermination of the British in Honduras; and a fleet of boats, carrying six hundred men, sailed, surprised and took possession of the little island of Casina, which the Baymen occasionally inhabited as a refuge against the prevailing diseases of the coast. Some fell in the conflict, while many of the captives were loaded with chains, and marched blindfold through the forests to the distant town of Merida, from whence they were transported to the Havanna, and confined in solitary dungeons.

This calamity, the report of which was magnified from one colony to another, astonished and terrified the American subjects of Great Britain; and their affrighted imaginations enlarged the real extent of a momentary evil: for before the Spaniards had time to complete the destruction which they meditated, a force arrived which drove them headlong from the isle, and amply avenged, though it could not rescue, the captives who were so barbarously treated. The colony was, however, dispersed, and the Baymen retired, with their slaves, to Truxillo, or to the islands of Rattan and Bonaccoa, where, under the instructions of General Dalling, the Governor of Jamaica, they again

collected their strength, were reinforced by a body of the Mosquito Indians, and led by Captain Dalrymple to the attack of Omoa *, the key of the Bay, the rendezvous of the shipping, and the storehouse of the Spanish treasures. The town was besieged, the fortifications stormed, the garrison made prisoners, and their lives only granted in exchange for the liberty of those who were taken from the Casina isle. Nor were the unfortunate captives at Merida forgotten: their liberty was also restored by the convention, and such as had been sent to the prisons of the Moro were restored in safety to the Governor of Jamaica. Many of the Honduras settlers were induced to remain on the island of Rattan, which they fortified; for the Spaniards invested Omoa, while sickness had so diminished the British garrison, that the fort was dismantled, and the town

A.D. 1782. abandoned. But the Spaniards would not suffer them to rest there. A thousand men sailed from Truxillo, and summoned the British Governor to surrender. A spirited defiance was ill seconded by the wretched condition of the place;

March 17th. and the garrison and inhabitants at length surrendered prisoners of war, to be sent to the Havanna; there to be exchanged, and their slaves sold. The Spaniards set fire to the town,

* Journals of the Assembly, vol. vii. p. 285. The prizes taken at Omoa were the subject of much animadversion on General Dalling's conduct.

levelled all the forts and batteries, and carried off or destroyed all the guns. They then proceeded to the Black river on the Mosquito shore, took possession of it, and established themselves there in considerable force.

Still, however, the Baymen were not conquered—they harassed their enemies in their position, drove in their outposts, and finally, by a gallant assault, carried their principal fortress; which caused them such alarm that they laid down their arms and evacuated the Black river, on condition of being sent back to Omoa. The terror of Rodney's name was now spread throughout the Western seas; and Nelson, in the Badger sloop of war, guarded the logwood cutters, who again assembled on the Bay, from further depredations, until the British government, determined not to relinquish the settlement, made a more explicit arrangement for its peaceable occupation. The King of Spain formally ceded the right of cutting mahogany, as well as logwood; for it was the lamentable misconstruction of the seventh article of the treaty which alone led to the unfortunate result of yielding up the settlements on the Black river, and the Mosquito shore. In consequence of this reconciliation, the sincerity and continuance of which might be reasonably suspected, the colonists, with their slaves, repaired again to Belize; and the Spanish monarch, with an appearance

August 30.

A.D. 1783.

A.D. 1786.

of liberality, bestowed an extraordinary mark of his royal favour, by extending the original limits of that settlement, from the mouth of the Belize to that of the Sibeen. This accession of strength and territory elevated the colony to a respectable rank; but it also rendered it an object of increasing jealousy to the perfidious Spaniards, who allowed the inhabitants but little respite from the hostile vigilance which so long had checked their prosperity. With their characteristic treachery they silently prepared, and warily dispatched, a formidable squadron under the command of O'Neil, the Governor of Yucatan, while the settlers at Belize narrowly watched the suspected progress of the formidable armament. The force consisted of two thousand troops, assisted by five hundred seamen, and embarked on board an armed flotilla of thirty-one vessels. The Baymen beheld the storm approaching, and their exertions to meet it were diligent, and successful. By a noble act of zeal, they burnt to the ground their valuable possessions on the Casina isle,—a desperate but effectual method of defence, which can be executed only by a people who prefer their independence to their property; removed the beacons which could direct the enemy through the intricacies of the shoals; and when the object of attack could no longer be doubted, gallantly met, and successfully repulsed them in several unequal engagements. The Spaniards, provoked by such a stubborn re-

A.D. 1798. Sept 10.

sistance from a handful of undisciplined merchants and their slaves, collected all their strength for an overwhelming attack. The crowded decks of their nine largest vessels, and the boats of the whole squadron, presented a forest of bayonets, or pikes; and, under cover of their gun-boats, the formidable armada bore down upon the little fleet of sloops and flats, which had been hastily collected, but resolutely manned. The engagement lasted three hours—the shot did great execution amongst the crowded Spaniards, whose line of battle was soon destroyed. they fell into inextricable confusion, and fled as fast as disorder and disability would allow them *. Eight of their largest vessels got to sea, and stood to the northward; the remainder shaped their course for Baccalar, but were so damaged that few survived a tempest which assailed them, or entered the port to relate the tale of their various dangers. Thus perished the last hopes of Spain to drive the British settlers from Honduras; and the result of the action which overturned the baseless fabric of her pretensions and her pride, was, in a great measure, owing to the conspicuous courage of slaves, whose fidelity had been secured by the uniform humanity which signalised the settlers of Belize even more honourably than this their splendid achievement.

Encouraged by this triumph, the limits of the

* See Lord Balcarres' dispatch to the Duke of Portland in the Annual Register.

colony were extended by the increasing demand and scarcity of mahogany and dye-woods; while forts were erected to protect the colonists from further annoyance. At the peace of Amiens, Honduras was, however, again overlooked; and the possession of it, left thus unauthorised, caused no little alarm in those who beheld, within the courts of France and Spain, a strong disposition to treat the settlement as an encroachment. The discussion, however, was soon closed by the war; and Honduras still remains undisturbed, under British authority, and as one of the dependencies of Jamaica.

Yet the settlement has not been free from those misfortunes which are inseparable from delegated power, and a distant throne. In the year 1814, a Superintendant was sent there, who commenced his government by the most artful efforts to obtain popularity. He officially wrote to Earl Bathurst, that "in no part of the world had he seen the labouring classes possessing anything like the comforts of the slaves in Honduras:" and the confidence which he gained by this and similar acts of justice, enabled him to obtain the consent of the colony to the abolition of an office which was obnoxious to him. An agent in London was thought an unnecessary precaution where such a Governor would espouse its cause; and, though some saw through the artifice, many joined his party from ambition, more from fear.

Colonel Arthur has been preferred to a superior government;—Honduras has revived beneath the administration of General Codd; and her innocence or freedom, which has been repeatedly asserted by the sword, has lately been amply justified by the pen*.

* The inhabitants of Honduras have published, and distributed amongst the members of the British senate, a very able "Defence" of themselves, and exposition of their wrongs. Candour and accuracy are conspicuous in every page.

## Chapter XIV.

Interference of Jamaica on behalf of the Northern Colonies.—Hutchinson the Assassin.—Declaration of War by France and Spain.—Defence of Jamaica.—Legislative proceedings.—Fire at Savanna la Mar.—Hurricane.—Distress of the Colony.—Storm.—Dalling's Government.—General Campbell.—Rodney's Victory.—Peace in Europe, and in the West.

[A.D. 1772—1783.]

When Sir Robert Walpole was earnestly pressed to legislate for the British colonies during the progress of the Spanish war in the year 1739, he exclaimed, "Never: I will leave that to my successors, who may possess more courage and resources than I do, or may be less friendly to commerce than myself. It has ever been a maxim with me, to encourage the trade of the colonists in America in its utmost latitude; and I have even found it necessary to connive at some irregularities: for, by encouraging them in an extensive foreign commerce, if they should gain five hundred thousand pounds, I shall find at least half of that sum in his Majesty's exchequer before the expiration of two years; and this is taxing them much more according to our constitution, and to their own." Far different, however, were the councils which guided the British senate, when, twenty-six

years afterwards, its pestilential decrees blighted the fair prospect of increasing industry, and imposed an arbitrary burden for the sake of a small and dishonest gain: decrees which argued a want of reflection scarcely to be equalled in the public conduct of any nation; they breathed a spirit of tyranny without example in real or fictitious history, and, as might have been expected, alienated America from her parent for ever: for she was reduced to that uncommon distress, that she had more to fear from oppression than from resistance. The system of taxation fell like a hail storm on the land; like a devouring pestilence on its inhabitants; and the most effectual means were adopted in the six principal northern colonies to shelter themselves from a tempest which poured upon them from so many different quarters.

With the exception of St. Christopher and Nevis, the West Indian plantations all bowed their heads with a readiness which their unalienable loyalty would dictate, or their helpless condition might seem to require. Jamaica was soothed and flattered by "the royal approbation of its dutiful and discreet conduct:" but when she found herself involved in the inevitable consequences of the destructive contest, she also dared to raise her feeble voice; and with the trembling hands of fearful impotency placed at the foot of the throne a petition, which the thirty-nine million of sterling money vested in her lands might surely authorise. Her existence, in common with that of the western colonies in general, depended, in

a great measure, upon a free and beneficial commerce with the provinces of the north: the lapse of nearly a century had established an open trade, which circumstances had once rendered it expedient to restrict*; and when her petition was called for in the British parliament, Lord North was compelled to produce it;—but he did so with an ill-dissembled reluctance, which proved how much the wary minister depended upon the popular ignorance of the real state of the colonies, to carry the measures of his doubtful policy.

It would be foreign to my purpose to enter into a detail of the origin, progress, or events of the struggle which ended in the independence of America, and which proved that intolerable taxes must distract, and may provoke, those who will not, or who cannot relinquish their country. But it would be easy to maintain the principle upon which the petition of the Jamaica legislature† was founded, and directed against measures which left no alternative but to starve, or to rebel; measures which, if persisted in by England, would have ruined all her colonies, and rooted up all her commerce, leaving her statute-book a black and bloody roll of proscriptions,—a frightful code of tyranny and rigour,—a monstrous digest of penalty, incapacity, and general attainder; so that, open it where you would, a title would present itself for destroying some trade, or

* See Note XXVII. † See Note XXVIII.

ruining some province *. I am not disposed to prolong a discussion, however, which it is painful even to approach, and shall be content to add that the petition was suspected to have had some weight upon a cabinet whose policy was then strictly canvassed in the glowing language of Burke, and by the keen eye of Fox; and humanity will be disposed to encourage any suspicion which testifies the jurisdiction of conscience, or the remorse of an oppressive government.

A.D. 1772. Jamaica had then attained perhaps the highest pinnacle of her political existence: for the wars, which soon commenced, and which lasted, with little intermission, during nearly half a century, so changed the system of the British world, that they left these colonies in a state from which they have little to hope from the decrees of fate, or the vicissitudes of fortune. They shot a last ray of declining glory after the victories of Rodney, and in the defeat of France; but the principle of decay has now been long increasing in her vitals, and it wants not the aid of prophecy to pronounce, that, as a British colony of value or importance, her days are few and numbered. The death of Governor Trelawney, which had surprised the Assembly in its sitting, closed what, in parliamentary language, must be called the Convention; and the Lieut.-Governor,

* See Burke's speeches in the House of Commons. According to the malevolent testimony of Mr. Southey, the "boasted Assemblies" of the colonies are alone answerable for all the evils which the interference of the British Parliament has inflicted, or may still inflict.—*Chron. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 415.

after paying a just tribute to the memory and manly virtues of his friend, closed a mournful session which was marked by no other event of importance. His government was easy and judicious; and we may observe, as a sure symptom of domestic happiness, that, during a period of ten years, which includes the short administration of Sir Basil Keith, the events of the colony furnished very few materials for its internal history, though many connected with the war in which Great Britain was engaged. The cane and coffee fields were delivered from the devastations of the rebel slaves; the savage war-whoop was suspended on the borders of the forests; and Rodney, with his invincible arm, guarded the island from the assaults of a foreign foe. One of the first active services of that commander, who was soon to shine upon a nobler field, was noticed in the public thanks of the Assembly for his successful exertions to apprehend a notorious assassin, who had spread terror throughout the island. The recurrence of African barbarities, with which these pages have been stained, will naturally suggest the idea that the miscreant was a slave; on the contrary, the lovers of a tragic legend will be pleased to hear that he was a man of wealth and ability, and a Scotchman.

In the close and wood-bound vale of Pedro, situated in the parish of Saint Ann, and nearly in the centre of the island, stood a small and lonely turret, dignified by its northern architect with the name of Edinburgh Castle. It commanded the only pass

leading directly from the south side of the island to the north: the defile is scarcely an hundred yards across; and the mountains which inclose the solitary vale, arise on either side to an almost Alpine height. On this spot, which might have been selected for a new Thermopylæ, there dwelt a wretch whose birth disgraced the "land of the mountain and the flood:"—his name was Hutchinson—he possessed a few negroes, acquired a small property, and first stocked it with the strayed or stolen cattle of his neighbours. His slaves were the participators of his crimes; they were recently from Africa; their native habits were familiarized with the sight of blood; and the mistaken sense of duty, if not their characteristic cruelty, taught them silence and submission, though the dark and midnight crime of assassination stains not the nature of the unprovoked African. Yet no traveller who attempted that defile, however poor or wretched he might be, ever escaped the confines of their owner's narrow territory. The needy wanderer would sometimes call for refreshment at the only habitation which for many miles had cheered his weary eye, but it was the last he was destined ever to behold. The wealthy passenger was alike the mark and victim of his unerring aim, from a loop-hole under which he was compelled to pass. A thick-set hedge of logwood had also been so prepared by the road-side, at a short distance from the house, that while he could detain in conversation any one who might pass during the time that

he was engaged in his cattle-fold hard by, his slaves from behind the fence could leisurely take aim at the devoted victim. It was not, however, money which the murderer thus sought. A savage disposition, wrought perhaps by some injury inflicted on him in early life, an unnatural detestation of the human race, could be gratified only by the sight of blood, and the contemplation of human agony; for if his destined victim were infirm, or sick, he carefully revived his strength; or if he could behold him first in fancied security, in a convivial assembly, or perhaps happy in the bosom of his family, it gave him greater satisfaction to inflict the blow which cut him off, and increased his appetite to relish the expiring struggle. To enjoy the gory spectacle, he first dissevered the ghastly head from the palpitating body: his most pleasing occupation was to whet his streaming knife; the gloomy temper of his soul was sated only by a copious flow of blood; and when he could no longer gaze upon the decaying countenance, he placed it high in the air, in the hollow trunk of a cotton tree, where vultures might complete the horrid deed. The mangled carcass was thrown down one of those deep and hollow drains which are peculiar to mountainous countries of volcanic origin, and whose mouths, descending perpendicularly, conduct the torrents which periodically fall to the level of the ocean. Nor were his crimes for many years suspected, though his society was shunned; so artfully did he contrive to conceal a character which other-

wise might have been charitably pronounced insane.

Justice, however, was at length gratified by the punishment of the guilty monster. Callendar, the manager of a property in the same vale, had suffered much from the depredations of the cattle which strayed from the castle, and having driven some back to their owner, requested that they might not be allowed to trespass so again. Whether Hutchinson was not prepared for the visit, or whether he only waited for a more gratifying display of cruelty, does not appear; but Callendar was hospitably entertained, and dismissed with assurances which satisfied him. The murderer returned his visit; and with apparent cordiality passed the day with him. But his victim was watched, and as he shortly afterwards rode past the fatal hedge, a rifle-bullet stretched him on the earth. An unsuspicious victim confined to his bed in the turret above, beheld the transaction, and effected his timely escape. The assassin was unmasked, and fled: the whole country was alarmed and in pursuit; when no less than forty-seven watches were found in his chests, and the number of persons who, within a few years, had strangely disappeared, raised an immediate suspicion of their fate. The unfathomable charnel-house which Hutchinson had imagined would not give up its dead, was searched upon the information of one of the guilty slaves; and, suspended on the point of a projecting rock, at the depth of many feet, was discovered, by the

help of a bundle of lighted straw, the mangled body of the unfortunate Callendar. The abyss which yawned below had more effectually received his other victims. Hutchinson, in the mean time, escaped to sea in an open boat, from the port of Old Harbour—he succeeded in reaching a vessel under sail, and when the vigilance of Sir George Rodney intercepted his flight, he threw himself into the waves, from whence he was rescued for a still more ignominious end. The enormity of his crimes might be exceeded by his hardened insolence before his judges; but his reckless gaze upon the instrument which was to convey him before the tribunal of his Maker, finds no parallel in the history of crime or punishment: nor can the annals of human depravity equal the fact that, at the foot of the scaffold, he left an hundred pounds in gold to erect a monument, and to inscribe the marble with a record of his death *.

Within thirty years the slave population of Jamaica had increased from ninety-nine thousand, to upwards of two hundred thousand, a circumstance pregnant with danger when considered with reference to the numerical strength of the whites, which exceeded not sixteen thousand, and whose proportionate increase had been no more than three. But the revenue of the island had received a considerable accession, and the temporary peace of the interior afforded an opportunity, which was eagerly embraced, to enlarge the privileges, and secure the

* See Note XXIX.

protection of the slave*. Experience had, however, taught the colonists not to allow their apparent security to have any effect upon their vigilance; and they watched, with fearful anxiety, the progress of the war around them. In Cuba, the Spaniards had silently collected a force of ten battalions of infantry, with four regiments of artillery and horse: in Hispaniola there were four thousand effective regulars, besides a powerful militia; while the garrisons of Carthagena and Porto-Rico were strong and formidable. Jamaica, alike the object of jealousy and terror, was alone defenceless in the centre of this disposable armament, and well might her people tremble for their safety. The state of their fortifications, the want of arms, and the insufficiency of two reduced regiments to withstand the combined force of the suspicious powers whose colonies surrounded them, were ample grounds to warrant a strong appeal for aid. Their distance from the throne almost forbade the hope that their peculiar circumstances could obtain the consideration which their importance required, and they beheld with less surprise than sorrow the departure of the British fleet, to the vigilance and bravery of whose commander they had gratefully ascribed the strange tranquillity their isle enjoyed.

A.D. 1774.

Sir Basil Keith arrived; and the alarming scarcity of provisions, occasioned by the American war, rendered it necessary to keep

A.D. 1775.

* Journals of the Assembly, vol. vi. p. 497.

within the island the little it possessed, by the distressing and unpopular expedient of a strict embargo. He had, however, the grateful duty to perform of conveying the royal thanks to the colony for the ample supply that had been voted to the troops; and for the grant of three thousand pounds towards erecting an hospital and barrack for them. But a necessary act of judicial severity interrupted the mild tenor of his short administration. It fell to his lot to sign the death-warrants of thirty rebels who had headed an extensive conspiracy in the parishes of Hanover and Westmoreland, and they were executed with such exemplary severity as struck a timely terror into the minds of their misguided followers. The plot had been providentially frustrated when on the point of execution and success; and the ready assistance afforded by the navy, with the active spirit of the militia, restored peace, and received the acknowledgments of a grateful people. Keith, after a popular administration of less than two years, fell sick and died: a public funeral and costly monument demonstrated the respect of the colony, and Dalling resumed the government, in which he was soon confirmed, with the full powers of Captain-General. A.D. 1777.

A proof of the commercial difficulties under which Jamaica laboured at the commencement of this unfortunate war, is to be found in the fact that the rate of insurance homewards was at the ruinous expense of twenty-three per cent. But the fruits of spirited

industry were encouraged by the judicious distribution of bounties and rewards; and this incentive supplied, in some degree, the deficiencies which the interrupted trade occasioned:—while the apprehension of further oppression was seasonably allayed by an official declaration, "that the King and Parliament of Great Britain would not impose any tax, duty, or assessment whatever, payable in any colony, except duties necessary for the regulation of commerce, the net proceeds of which should be paid to the use of the colony in which they might be levied, to be at the disposal of its General Assembly*."

A.D 1778.

The war held on its sullen pace, and the fears of Jamaica were soon realised by a declaration of the French ambassador that his Sovereign acknowledged the independence of "THE UNITED STATES," and had sent a fleet to their assistance. The artful projects of the House of Bourbon were soon displayed in the favourable terms which were granted to the surprised colony of Dominica, where hostilities first commenced. Its garrison surrendered by capitulation, and thus prevented the impending fury of an assault which it was unprepared to sustain; while assurances were given that the only change in the condition of the inhabitants should be the change in sovereignty; a political, but faithless act of lenity, intended to corrupt the loyalty of the other British plantations, whose grievances

March 13.

* 18th Geo. III. cap. 12.

might ensure but little resistance to so temperate a life. The loss of Dominica was, however, speedily retaliated by an action to which, according to the event, the public opinion would apply the name of rashness or of heroism. Saint Lucia acknowledged the power of the British arms: while the capture of two of Sir Peter Parker's frigates, off Hispaniola, was the first information which Jamaica received of the commencement of hostilities. A naval engagement between an English and American squadron, off the shores of Barbadoes, stained the western waves with kindred blood;—Saint Vincent, where dissensions reigned with hostile violence, made but a feeble resistance to the forces of La Roche:—and the tide of war rolled onward to Jamaica, where martial law was proclaimed, amidst the bustle of hostile preparation. It passed, however, for a time; and D'Estaing's formidable squadron, which had spread a panic through the British islands, proceeded in triumph to the North.

Dec. 23. A.D. 1779. June 18.

Spain joined in the unequal contest against Great Britain; and Jamaica had more reason than ever to apprehend the chances of the war; for she was still left exposed to the combined fleets, whose sails whitened the seas around, with one ship of the line, and five small frigates only to protect her shores. Her own resources were quite unequal to cope with the force which threatened her, although they were all called forth by the information derived from the

intercepted letter of a French officer, that an immediate descent was meditated, and the force prepared. A committee of the House of Assembly was appointed to prepare the means of defence, and to put into execution the resolution of a council of war which held its sittings daily; when it was ascertained, beyond all doubt, that the enemy waited only for the arrival of their ships of war to cover the landing of nine thousand regulars, collected in Martinique, and eighteen thousand prepared to join them at the rendezvous in Hispaniola. Under these alarming circumstances it was decreed, that all plantation work should be abandoned, and the agricultural strength of the colony was employed in the cultivation of provisions to supply the population which might be put in motion. Sir Peter Parker despatched a frigate to Lord Howe with a strong remonstrance and petition for assistance; and the activity of the inhabitants was redoubled. The designs of the military Governor were executed with diligence and effect: from all quarters the people assembled for the defence of their capital; the largest trees of the forest were thrown across the roads, and the soldiers were relieved by the diligence of the people, who watched while they slept, and laboured while they reposed. The prison doors were thrown open to supply workmen for the fortifications, and twelve hundred slaves daily assisted in the entrenchments of Saint Jago. Courage soon discovers the resources of the most desperate situations: at the

approach of danger, a militia, trained and armed, started into existence, which the ordinary laws had never been able to collect; the townsmen of the capital sometimes represented, in a vacant post, the troops which had been drawn to more essential duties; and, at the earnest entreaty of the Assembly, the Governor was reluctantly induced to suspend the execution of martial law, and accept the voluntary service of the country, without those distressing disabilities which its activity rendered useless. The lines of Fort Augusta, Fort Charles, and the Apostle's Battery, were enlarged or repaired; a commanding position at Old Harbour, and another above Port Henderson, was already crowned with formidable redoubts: and to a small fortress, commanding the bridge in the rocky passage of the river road, were to be conveyed, in the event of invasion, the public records of the island. The extraordinary expenditure of money upon the erection of so many public works was borne without a murmur; the only assistance sought was that of artillery and arms; and the request was accompanied by a suggestion that it would greatly relieve the distress of the inhabitants if the British regiments were paid in coin*.

Although no more time was devoted to deliberation than was necessary to give efficacy to action, the civil councils of the island were not neglected, amidst the general preparations for war. Eight and

* See Note XXX.

twenty laws, discussed in the General Assembly, exemplified the patience, and the harmony with which those were passed which heavily burdened themselves, proved the liberality of its senators. One only, which were intended to limit the duration of Assemblies, was rejected by the Governor, until the royal pleasure could be known; and the principles of the inhabitants were never more apparent than in the unanimity which proved their warm attachment to the British crown*. By their exertions their little bark still floated on the surface, when so many of the adjacent islands were overwhelmed in the raging tempest of the war; and alone, amidst their enemies, they defended by their arms their high-spirited independence.

At length the 79th regiment, under Colonel Humphreys, arrived from Philadelphia, with a promise that further aid should speedily be sent from England. A powerful squadron was also despatched from New York, and it reached the island in time to behold the destruction of the Glasgow frigate, which was burned to the water's edge in the harbour of Port Royal. The arrival of transports and troops at Hispaniola, justified the Governor in preparing for the threatened invasion by the proclamation of martial law; by an extraordinary exertion of his own authority, he seized all the provisions and military stores in Kingston for the public service;

* See Note XXXI.

and after these bold, but necessary measures, he convened the Assembly to confirm them.

I willingly suppress the detail of those discontents nothing short of mutiny*, which broke out amongst the island troops. The scarcity or badness of their rations had relaxed the discipline of the garrison of Kingston—their complaints were specious—their clamours were loud—but the rising sedition was appeased by the authority of the Governor, who represented to the assembled force the importance of obedience, the rewards of patience, and the unpardonable guilt of setting an example of insubordination, which might be followed by those whose case was even harder than their own. His vigilance intercepted a letter from the Count d'Argoutl to Don Joseph Navarra, the Governor of the Havanna, detailing the project of the French and Spanish forces against Jamaica. In the certainty of conquering an island of the utmost importance to the combined operations of the enemy, the Count observed, "When we treat of taking the island of Jamaica, we are to understand that it must belong to the king my master, or to his Catholic Majesty;" meaning, no doubt, to exclude the participation of their new allies from what was considered as already lost to Great Britain. The active co-operation of the slaves was calculated upon with the utmost confidence; but it was the rash indulgence of a groundless hope; for though their partial revolts have

* Journals, vol. vii. p 149—159.

been frequent and distressing, yet the great body of the Jamaica negroes have ever been too well treated to cherish any desire for a change of masters; and they have always remained faithful to their country on emergencies of danger.

The train of artillery intended for the use of the island, fell into the hands of the enemy, whose cruisers were active and successful on the seas around; but it was speedily replaced, and accompanied by the 88th regiment, under the command of Colonel Keating; while the highest encomiums of the King rewarded the spirited exertions of the planters in the defence of what his Majesty was pleased to call his "his highly valued and important colony." The strength of their enemies was, however, rapidly increasing; and their various forces were drawing towards the island devoted to their fury. The accession of a Spanish fleet from Cadiz had enabled them to reckon no less than six and thirty sail of the line in the combined fleet prepared against Jamaica; and its vast superiority induced Sir Peter Parker to apply for and obtain the assistance of the gallant Admiral Rowley, who joined him at Port Royal, with a reinforcement of ten first-rate ships. The timid Spaniards still lingered in their ports, and the diseases of the climate soon made such havoc in their crowded ranks that they proceeded to the Havanna to recruit their strength before they ventured on an attack they saw Jamaica now well prepared for: while Guichen's fleet was

A.D. 1780.

so far disabled by its service that, instead of proceeding to North America, it was obliged to return to Cadiz to refit. Rodney, without being aware of its real destination, imagined that he was pursuing it to New York, and thus he saved his squadron from the effects of the tremendous hurricane which soon swept the seas and laid waste the islands of the west. This respite from the alarms of invasion was, however, injurious to Jamaica. It gave rise to the unfortunate expedition to Saint Juan, which drained the colony of many of the troops, and some of the inhabitants*, who were necessary to its defence; and the obstinacy of the Governor in this instance damped the ardour of his subjects†. The tax of five per cent. imposed on the customs and excise, was also severely felt, especially by the merchants; and the removal of the judges, on which was raised, and rejected, a popular law to render their situations permanent, rendered the discontent of the country loud and alarming. All the channels of communication by which a supply of specie could gain access to the island, were stopped by the war, and the request was again repeated to the King, that his troops might receive their monthly pay in cash.

Such was the distressing state of the island when the calamities, incident to the tremendous visitations of storm and earthquake, were ushered in by the horrors of a conflagration which destroyed the flourishing

* See Note XXXII. † Journals, vol. vii. p. 336.

town of Savanna la Mar; whose inhabitants, while yet gazing in mute despair upon their smoking ruins, felt the hurricane burst upon their heads. A series of storms then commenced, which, with the exception of only two seasons, spread ruin and disease throughout the colonies during the space of seven successive years. Since the year 1751, there had been none attended with any serious mischief: and it is worthy of remark, that the recurrence of these awful visitations is thus sometimes interrupted for years, tor ecommence, however, with a fury and perseverance, proportioned to the time which the elements have remained inactive.

Oct. 3d.

A tempest in the air may injure the surface of the globe, but the action of earthquakes and volcanoes has produced the mighty changes which deface the fair forms of nature herself: while their periods and effects lie far beyond the power of man to provide against, or the reach of human curiosity to explain. The fever of the earth, which, in these regions, usually accompanies the disorder of the heavens, has sometimes produced such an impulsive or vibratory motion, that the shock has been communicated throughout the fourth vast quarter of the earth, and cities, even mountains themselves, have been crumbled into dust. The stroke which agitates an ant-hill will crush the insect myriads in the dust; and the works of man are equally impotent against the assaults of nature; yet he seems to have here industriously laboured for his own destruction in the

masses of unyielding masonry with which he encloses himself; and the Indian natives of these isles, whose pliant architecture bent to the waving earth, might reasonably deride the folly of their ostentatious conquerors, who, at such a cost, erect their splendid sepulchres*.

The fury of the elements burst in its utmost rage upon the western extremity of Jamaica. The morning had been unusually calm, but the sky was still of a fiery red. About noon the gale commenced from the south-east; and, with increasing violence, it soon veered round to the south, in a tempest which in violence was unremitted during eight successive hours. The uproar of the elements drowned the subterraneous bellowings of the imprisoned fires; the alarming motion of the earth was scarcely noticed in the thundering wind and beating rain which swept its surface; and the lightning, which issued in streams from the opening heavens, illuminated the dense sheets of water which descended from clouds of a fixed sulphureous hue, explaining almost the sublime mysteries of the universal deluge. The impression of the earthquake was communicated to the waters; the sea seemed mingled with the clouds, while the heaving swell of the earth, as it rolled beneath its bed, bore the raging floods over their natural boundaries, overwhelmed the coasts,

* I have borrowed the idea from the beautiful pages of Gibbon, who applied it to the architecture of the East:—how much more, then, is it applicable here!

and retreating with irresistible force, bore all before them. To the distance of half a mile, the waves carried and fixed vessels of no ordinary size, leaving them the providential means of sheltering the houseless inhabitant. Not a tree, or bush, or cane was to be seen: universal desolation prevailed, and the wretched victims of violated nature, who could obtain no such shelter, and who had not time to fly to the protecting rocks, were either crushed beneath the falling ruins, or swept away, and never heard of more. The midnight horrors of the scene were viewed as the last convulsions of an expiring world; but the waters seemed for a moment to subside under the stroke of a tremendous earthquake, and the decreasing power of the wind was soon perceived in the more sensible motion of the convulsed earth.

The scattered remains of houses, whose tenants were dead or dying—the maddening search for wives and children, who were lost—the terrific howling of the frightened negroes, as it mingled with the whistling but subsiding winds—and the deluged state of the earth, strewed with the wreck of nature, and ploughed into deep ravines, was the scene which day-light ushered in; and, as if to mock the misery it had caused, the morning sun was again bright and cheerful. But a pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the waters, and so rapid was the contagion, that several persons expired within an hour, and in the solemn act of publicly imploring the mercy of heaven. The parishes of Hanover and

Westmoreland suffered most; for it seems, from its effects upon the other islands, that it was the eastern wing of the hurricane which swept the western districts of Jamaica: yet such a violation of nature could not but be felt severely in every part of the island. The mortality, especially amongst the negroes, was, for some time, constant and visible; and the gloomy apprehension of the inhabitants expected almost the failure of the population. Yet the numbers that were left still exceeded the measure of subsistence, for vegetation had perished. The inhabitants of Kingston, with a liberality which does them eternal honour, subscribed ten thousand pounds from purses already drained by the events of the war, to relieve the wretched sufferers; and the British Parliament sent a donative of forty thousand pounds in specie. The Governor lent his timely aid; and the House of Assembly was convened to preserve from ruin those sufferers whose complicated misfortunes required a large supply from the public purse.* Some alleviation of the public distress was also obtained by the immediate permission of a free trade with Ireland.

The storm disabled the Spanish fleet, which sought shelter in the Havanna, with the loss of four first-rate ships, and many of a smaller description. But the perfidious Dutch, who had long been carrying

* The hurricane, which was even more mischievous in Barbadoes, took a week in passing thither; it commenced there on the night of the 9th of October. Eighty thousand pounds were granted by Parliament to that colony.

on a secret correspondence between Amsterdam and the rebellious subjects of Britain, now joined the crusade, and were instantly punished by the loss of their rich and favourite colony of Saint Eustatia, which was the storehouse of the combined fleets, and soon became the auction mart of the west.

A.D. 1781. Saint Martin, Saba, Saint Bartholomew, Demarara, and Essequibo, shared the same fate; and the French and Spanish islands, distressed for their usual supply of stores and provisions, gained nothing by the accession of such allies, until the daring enterprise of the Marquess de Bouille recaptured Saint Eustatia, Saba, and St. Bartholomew, intercepted the British treasures on their passage home, and turned once more the tide of war.

The accumulated distresses which impaired the condition of Jamaica, and the unnatural exertions she had made, were severely felt in all her institutions: yet what Parliament had bestowed with one hand, it soon deprived her of with the other; and the time was most unfortunately chosen for the imposition of a new tax* upon the staple produce of her labour. The memorial of the Assembly to the King displayed the dangers, the difficulties, and the resolution of the afflicted colonists. "According to your commands, we have repaired the fortifications,

* See page 168. In the course of this history I have sometimes mentioned, and much oftener slighted, such evidences of a want of faith. The duty on a hogshead of sugar now amounted to eight pounds.

fed your troops, and annually given them an additional pay:—hitherto we have successfuly protected your valuable colony from an host of enemies; but our fortunes are now ruined, our resources exhausted, and accumulated debts bear hard upon us. Success is the gift of Providence, but the reputation of kings depends on the prosperity of their people. Permit us to speak with freedom: you have visited us, under all our calamities of war, and tempest, with an additional burden of taxes which will drive your faithful subjects from their land. You must relieve us, or we must abandon the colony. If you wish that we should remain, send us subsistence; if you desire that we should conquer, send us arms; or, in future, we can neither raise money for your service, nor provisions for your soldiers*." The memorial was replied to; but its petition was disregarded;—

Aug. 1st. and to complete the misfortunes of the sinking colony, another hurricane, of little less fury than the last, renewed the desolation which a rapid vegetation would quickly have repaired. Temporary relief was sought, and obtained, from the abundant provinces of South Carolina, and Georgia; but the evil was so deeply fixed by increasing taxes, and restrictive trade, that more effectual succour was required.

The government of General Dalling drew towards

* See the Memorial, p. 381, and the reply of Lord North, p. 597, of the seventh volume of the Journals of Assembly.

its close; and the latter part of his career was singularly unfortunate*. Envy, and the irritation of public distress, accused him to his monarch; who listened, and hastily recalled him. I am not qualified to examine, nor am I prepared to believe, that his enemies had reason on their part—that the suspension of the Advocate-General proceeded from the Governor's venality; or the removal of four judges from his injustice; or the irregular convention of *his* first Assembly from motives of corruption. It is easy for faction and calumny to shed their poison on the administration of the best of men, and even to accuse their virtues, by artfully confounding them with those vices to which they bear the nearest affinity; and the distressing administration of General Dalling might lay him open to censures which he could neither deserve nor control. Major-General Campbell, who had commanded the forces in Jamaica throughout the war, succeeded to the government, in which he was soon fully confirmed. The age of the colony could never boast a more peaceful accession; for he found its legislators in perfect harmony;—and his predecessor might, at least, boast that, with unexampled success, he had, for ten years, preserved his Council modest, and his

A.D. 1781. November.

* I have used, without undertaking to reconcile, the facts, which Southey's Chronological History, the periodical works of the times, and the Journals of Assembly, have afforded me. The patient reader may consult the last with most safety, p. 285—322. of the seventh volume.

Assembly quiet. Public distress had indeed united their determinations and invigorated their arms. Each individual, though groaning under misfortune and deprivation, was satisfied when he beheld the employment of his taxes in the means of defence, and in the security of his property;—his discontent and indignation were roused only by the extortion of British taxes, and by the ingratitude of the power which took them; while he looked with anxiety on the progress of the war, which seemed to approach in a way that there was no escaping. The very slaves fulfilled with cheerfulness the orders of their masters; they were faithful, active, submissive, in the various occupations which the trumpet of war, or the labour of the field, might alternately call them to: the deserters kept themselves within the boundaries of their forests; the Maroons within the limits of their towns; and, with the exception of *Three-fingered* Jack, the notorious rebel of Saint Mary, no insubordination disturbed the tranquillity of the interior. The rejection, by the Legislative Council, of a popular law to render permanent the judges, and to limit their number,—a measure which arose from their violent suspension by the late Governor,—was the only event which threatened to disturb the internal harmony: but when the motive of the Board became known, and that it was only because its members were not to have a power in their nomination, its voice was quickly hushed; and all eyes were directed to the approach-

A.D. 1782.

ing tumult of the war. The inhabitants beheld it now close upon their shores; they received official intelligence from the Admiralty, "that an expedition had undoubtedly been concerted between the cabinets of Madrid and France;" and from Madrid that, "on ne doute plus, ici, que l'expédition contre la Jamaïque ne soit resolue et concertée entre les cabinets de Bourbon, avec des forces supérieur[illegible] de mer et de terre, pour en assurer la conquête." Those preparations were instantly made which the emergency of the case required; and the roads to Kingston and Port Henderson were again guarded by a Spartan rampart of the bravest soldiers.

The town of Kingston, in the mean time, suffered a conflagration which augmented the general consternation: property to the amount of nearly a million was utterly destroyed; and had it not been for a providential shifting of the wind, not a house would probably have been left. If a veil interposes between the dim-sightedness of man and his future calamities, the same veil hides from him their alleviation; and a misfortune, which had not been feared, is often met by a remedy or a consolation which had not been hoped. From all the horrors of war and famine Jamaica was about to be relieved by one of the most brilliant events of modern history; and the unexpected victory of Sir George Rodney over the successful and exulting French, proved an event not less fortunate for Jamaica than destructive of the hopes of her enemies. After the

capitulation of the island of Saint Christopher, the movement of the fleet under the Count de Grasse had been closely watched by the British Admirals, Hood and Rodney; as it was evident that the intention of the enemy was to form a junction with the Spanish squadrons at Cuba and Hispaniola, on board of which were six thousand troops prepared for the invasion of Jamaica. The English commanders were becalmed under the lands of Dominica, with their enemies in sight, profiting by a favourable breeze which bore them to the object of their wishes; and had they effected the junction which they meditated, the naval force of the two crowns would have amounted to sixty sail of the line, and Jamaica must have fallen; but the breeze at length reached the British van, which pursued, and soon closed with, the French centre, while the rest of the fleet still remained unable to move. At nine in the morning of the ninth of April, the action commenced; the French force consisting of thirty-six sail of the line and ten frigates; the British of thirty-eight sail of the line*. Pressed by a vast superiority of numbers, the little squadron, which was favoured by the wind, stuck closely to the enemy, giving and receiving a tremendous cannonade for more than an hour—its van having brought-to, that it might not be further separated from the rest of the fleet. But the French kept under easy sail, and, when they had passed the headmost of their

April 8th.

* See Note XXXIII.

enemies, tacked in succession, forming again in the rear, so as to ensure the superiority of fifteen ships to eight. After about three hours thus occupied in the arts of attack and defence, and during which sixteen of the British ships were compelled to remain inactive spectators, De Grasse again stood off to windward. That night the English fleet blazed with innumerable lights; for it was employed in repairing the damage which otherwise would deprive it of all hope of renewing the action, or turning the enemy from the course he was pursuing to Jamaica; but in the morning the hostile armaments were again exerting all their prowess in the channel between Guadaloupe and Dominica, whose heights were crowded with spectators of their skill; and on the following day the enemy had got so far to windward as to weather Guadaloupe, and to be seen only from the mast-head of the British centre.

Almost despairing of a general action, the signal was made to chase some stragglers, hoping thus to draw the attention of the French admiral to their protection. The stratagem succeeded; both fleets kept in close order during the night; a general action became inevitable, and at seven in the morning, the sea was foaming beneath the hostile ships, as they passed and poured their broadsides into each other. Slowly and closely did the British line pass up under the lee of the enemy, so close that every shot did dreadful execution. A masterly manœuvre broke their line:

April 12th.

Rodney, in the Formidable, made the dreaded incision between the second and third ships astern of De Grasse, in the Ville de Paris; fortune fled before his flag; the invincible seamen he commanded had been formed by the habits and the conquests of years; his thundering cannon touched and silenced those of his opponents; and the unfortunate but brave De Grasse beheld himself divided from all his ships, never again to join them. His van bore up, endeavouring to form once more its broken line; but the effort was unavailing: disorder and dismay were everywhere apparent; a sagacious enemy perceived the full extent of the advantage he had obtained, and the defeat was irretrievable. The Count de Grasse was one of only three unwounded on his upper deck; and after a vigorous but vain resistance, he struck his colours to Sir Samuel Hood. Five sail of the line struck their colours also; one was sunk: fear and pursuit caused a general and disordered flight; severe and disgraceful were the wounds inflicted on their retreat, yet still a few escaped—while Rodney led his prizes in triumph to Port Royal. The artillery and battering train, intended for the destruction of the colony, were landed there amidst the grateful expressions of the inhabitants, thus rescued from ruin or destruction*; and who beheld their deliverer leading captive the object of their terror, the un-

* Journals of Assembly, vol. vii. pp. 453, 456, 463, where some interesting details may be read.

fortunate De Grasse, the commander of an armament far more formidable than had ever appeared upon the western seas. Nor was it one of the least memorable of Rodney's actions, that he afterwards captured the valuable collection of exotic plants* which a ship of France was bearing from Asia to Saint Domingo; and by the diffusion of which he multiplied the luxuries of Jamaica.

Having received the thanks and congratulations of the Indies, which he had delivered, and repeatedly triumphed over the fallen flag of his enemies, the naval hero sailed for England to enjoy his honours, and to obtain a signal though silent victory over the noisy eloquence of Burke, who had rudely attacked him in the imperial parliament for his conduct in the capture of Saint Eustatia. Whether his character was justly stained by the accusations of faithlessness or avarice, I possess not the documents to decide; but I will dare to observe that the last-named odious vice is certainly of all others the most hastily arraigned, and the most unmercifully condemned. The fame of Rodney's arms was fixed in the peerage, which his shining virtues honoured; while the faint and hollow praises of a faction, whose eyes had been dazzled and wounded by the fame of his glory, were supplied by the respect and admiration of his grateful country.

The first days of security and victory were devoted by the inhabitants of Jamaica to the congra-

* See Note XXXIV.

tulations of public joy; and they erected to their deliverer a marble statue, the unlimited expense of which was left to the execution and excellence of the best artist whom England could produce*. But the increase of taxes, which were drained by a sovereign too distant to perceive the misery he occasioned, and the distress, almost the famine, of the country, soon dispelled the momentary exultation. The impulse of becoming and honourable loyalty had caused the accumulation of an enormous debt, which the heaviest taxes could scarcely discharge: the extraordinary expenses of martial law within the year amounted to more than one hundred thousand pounds; the usual charges of government were nearly two hundred and fifty thousand more, and the means to meet them not an hundred and sixty thousand. The complaint was, therefore, not more loud than just, that, amidst all the exertions, and after the ravages of two hurricanes, the island was still the miserable victim of increased and illegitimate taxation. When all other classes of British subjects were reaping the fruits of a successful war, the inhabitants of Jamaica found themselves depressed, neglected, and compelled to behold the extraordinary prosperity of their hostile neighbours, who exhibited the hurry of unlimited traffic, and the splendour of overflowing wealth. Saint Domingo and Saint Christopher were mortifying contrasts to

A.D. 1783.

* It was executed by Bacon in his best manner, and cost three thousand guineas. See Note XXXV.

the forlorn condition of Jamaica: yet the liberality of the colony was further called upon for an immediate provision for the families of four hundred unfortunate loyalists who arrived from Georgia, with nearly five thousand slaves; and also for a considerable number of the Honduras settlers who fled from the calamities of war*.

The preparations of the hostile powers were continually directed to the capture of Jamaica; and her inhabitants trembled when they found themselves still the objects of attack, and that they were again to be subjected to all the calamities of a protracted contest: for although negotiations for peace were actively commenced, the British minister ordered them to prepare against invasion, as "it was beyond a doubt that the enemy still meditated an attack on Jamaica." The presence of a royal prince excited, however, a degree of energy and spirit which the weak condition of the colony could hardly have been expected to contain. The Duke of Clarence served here as a midshipman in the navy over which he now presides as High Admiral; he witnessed and reported the enthusiasm which was displayed in the defence of his royal father's possessions; and he afterwards beheld, what was still more gratifying, the effects of peace upon an island which had exerted itself beyond its strength. The prince returned to Jamaica in the year 1788; the island presented him

* A list of those to whom lands were allotted will be found in the Journals of Assembly, vol. viii. p. 36.

with a star of the value of a thousand guineas; and the pen of the historian is supplied with ample materials to exemplify, in the person of his Royal Highness, the true character of a patriot prince who, in the flower of youth, preferred the duties of naval service, to the splendour of a court and the attractions of unprofitable leisure.

## Chapter XV.

Government of General Clarke.—Origin of the Slave Question in Great Britain.—Administration of the Earl of Effingham.—Revolution in Saint Domingo.—Government of General Williamson.—French War.—Arrival of the Earl of Balcarres.—Maroon War.

[A.D. 1783—1796.]

The administration of Major-General Campbell, during a period of the most critical danger, had been honourable, disinterested, and successful: the utmost attention was paid to every branch of the civil department; and his exertions in the defence of the colony, against the threatened attack of a powerful and combined force, were judicious, firm, and unremitted. A splendid service of plate was a flattering attestation of his important services, and of the gratitude of those whom he had governed. General Clarke had scarcely assumed the government, when the island was again desolated by an earthquake and hurricane; which, however, were not so destructive as the withering prohibitions which were laid upon its trade and agriculture, at the termination of the war. The sugar plantations had been settled and had grown to maturity, with the sister colonies on the continent of America: they had been nursed in the same cradle; their natural

A.D. 1784.

July 10th.

alliance was strengthened by their common interests, and their united rivulets of gold and silver discharged into the Imperial reservoir a copious and perennial stream. Without a fair and liberal reciprocity of commerce and mutual assistance, neither would, in all probability, have ever approached maturity—assuredly the sugar colonies would not. Yet were they now, by their common parent, capriciously debarred from all intercourse; from that natural and necessary commerce, which enabled them to supply each other's deficiencies by the peculiar productions of their respective soils. They loudly complained of this forced divorce, and their remonstrances were rational, uniform, and becoming. "We stand before the throne," said the legislators of Jamaica, "the oppressed defenders of its distant provinces, and the advocates of the general interest: we are driven to the necessity of declaring that, although oppressed, and patient under the accumulated weight of affliction, brought upon us by war and tempest, we cannot submit in silence to be starved. We expect to be restored, by the British Parliament, to the only alternative which can prevent it—to that trade which can alone afford a chance of carrying on our estates, or of supplying our families with bread: we claim it as the birthright of every member of the empire; we demand it as one of the gifts of nature, to enable us to avert impending ruin *. The good sense of the Lieutenant-Governor perceived

* See Note XXXVI.

the justice, and his influence was exerted to obtain the prayer, of this petition: and to his disinterested but unsuccessful interference might be attributed, perhaps, the refusal of the crown to comply with the request of the colony that he might be appointed its full Governor. Revenge is profitable, gratitude is expensive;—Jamaica had interfered between the colonies and Great Britain—its interference was deemed officious; and it is the usual policy of civil war to remember injuries, but to forget the most important services. From this period the decline of Jamaica proceeded with accelerated speed: the succeeding years were each marked by a recurrence of those natural afflictions which the island had so long been subject to; and the inhabitants submitted, in silent despair, to calamities with which they were now become familiar.

In the autumn of three successive years, when the crops were ripening on the ground, the expectation of the planter was blasted by the extraordinary repetition of storm and earthquake; and the resources of the country were, consequently, so reduced that the Receiver-General exposed his empty chests, and declared his inability to pay the troops. Two hundred and forty thousand slaves were daily, and clamorously, demanding sustenance at the hands of their trembling owners, whose numbers did not amount to thirty thousand: the restrictions upon the importation of food were unremitted; the danger was imminent, the distress appalling—such as

the most fertile land, subject to visitations so tremendous, could not possibly relieve*. The only assistance afforded by the parent state was rather in favour of the local interests of Canada, than proving any relief to the suffering island of Jamaica; and was still but partial and imperfect; while this island beheld, with consternation, another storm gathering around it, which, though still suspended in its last effects, has clouded and destroyed all its prospects. A.D. 1788.

The doubtful, and often the disastrous events of the late war had, for the first time, drawn the attention of the inhabitants of Great Britain to their distant possessions in the west; possessions to which they began to ascribe some importance, when they found their enemies so determined to wrest them from their grasp. The sensibility of the higher classes of society was wounded by what they heard of the treatment of the slaves there, the sweat of whose brows sweetened their evening tea: and the ignorance of the lower orders was astonished by the report that slavery existed at all in the world, that mankind could be sold as cattle, or that the black monsters of the sun were literally human beings. It might be true, but it would be ungenerous, to attribute to party feeling, or to political principle, what at first assumed the appearance of that spirit of freedom

* Mr. Southey *thinks* otherwise (Chron. Hist. vol. iii. p. 15), but, with some slight exceptions, we may reasonably shut our eyes against the testimony of Mr. Southey.

and liberality, which characterises our native land: and we may rather ascribe to unworthy motives the interference of those who embraced the opportunity to impose upon the popular credulity, and raise their own fortunes by preaching the crusade which now commenced against the sugar colonies. Parliament could not but listen to the clamour which required the immediate abolition of the odious trade in slaves; but, in the disgust which is naturally excited by so cruel a traffic, the unfortunate West Indians were included, by the unjust application of the legal aphorism, that the receiver is as bad as the thief. An exception to this precept is, however, found in the fact that, although the planters had vested seventy millions of money in the cultivation of Jamaica, they were never concerned in the shipping trading to Africa, nor in the inhuman practice of tearing the negroes from their native land,—the crime was Britain's own, encouraged by its own government, supported by its own means.

The inhabitants, whose fate, but not whose character, was thus deeply involved, readily acknowledged that the principle of parliamentary interference was founded on humanity and common sense; for they had, themselves, applied more than once to have the slave trade restricted*; but while they offered their assistance to regulate the odious traffic, they refused to recognise the right of Parliament to injure or destroy private property, and they spurned the

* See Note XXXVII.

insinuation which would make them participators in the crimes and cruelties of the odious traffic. They minutely reviewed and humanely revised their own slave laws; and the agitation of the subject was so far favourable to the objects of them: but they trembled at the interference of those who, at the distance of four thousand miles, would attempt to interfere in a measure of which they already proved themselves so ignorant. Fortunately for the sons of Africa, they found advocates in the Imperial Parliament whose views were far above the acquirement of earthly riches; fortunately for the colonies, they had protectors there, whose experience taught them the wide difference between personal freedom, and real happiness, when applied to the native African. A.D. 1789.

Amongst the former was one of whom it is easier to speak with sincerity, than to be heard, perhaps, with patience: one whose enthusiasm remains a memorable instance how a wise man may deceive himself, how a good man may deceive others; how the conscience may slumber in a mixed and middle state between self illusion and voluntary artifice; yet of whose labours in the cause of humanity, the historian cannot adequately speak, and could but ill record the eloquence of those appeals which roused an intense feeling, almost unknown even to British bosoms. The tempest of debate might strike some lofty speaker to the ground; and the subtleties of an intricate policy might undermine, slowly and silently, the fabric of many a mighty argument; but he held

on his glorious course, and if he sometimes listened with a partial ear to the calumnies of those who held the objects of his care in chains, his error, and even his injustice, can only be attributed to the imperfections of human nature, which permits a favourite measure frequently to seize too firm a hold of a sensitive imagination. His political enemies were consequently not a few; his personal enemy was not to be found; and he might have been termed a happy man, happy in his temper, in his abilities, and in his early success, if indeed that epithet could ever be applied before the last term of the life of man. Flattery is a foolish suicide; she destroys herself with her own hands: but it becomes the duty of the annalist to state impartial facts, even if the statement sometimes draw upon him the imputation of a libeller; and the brightest pages in the Annals of Jamaica undoubtedly owe their moral splendour to the zeal of Mr. Wilberforce, whose exertions drew attention to her state, examined her history, reviewed her laws, and proved her far more sinned against than sinning.

The powers of eloquence were, indeed, never more generally exercised than in the first and memorable agitation of the rights of slavery; and the legal authorities of Great Britain were so dazzled by the splendour of the meditated act, which was to protect millions of their fellow-creatures from evils worse than death, that they deliberately gave it as their opinion, that the sugar-planters, who had

expatriated themselves to obtain a livelihood by their industry; who had embarked their lives and their fortunes on the public faith; who had expended the fruits of their toil upon the support of their parent land, and who had struggled for many years to maintain their natural allegiance,—were still entitled to no remuneration for the loss of that property which was their sole support, and which it appeared the desire of an unnatural parent to wrest from them. Large tracts of land in Jamaica were still lying rich in their wild luxuriance, and uncultivated for want of labourers: and, even if the measure of abolition did not evidently lead to emancipation, the mere stoppage of the only channel through which such labourers could be obtained, was an injury which, though far outweighed by the dictates of humanity, might lay some claim to consideration. Even the agitation of a point of such vital importance, at a period when the colony was struggling against torrents of affliction, was most ill-timed and unfortunate. The planters, during a long succession of years, had been venturing on hazardous speculations and perilous pursuits: bearing, with the most persevering industry, the weight of every miscarriage, yet continually pouring wealth into the lap of England. Their rights were, in fact, so established on the basis of England's faith, that Parliament confessed that it could claim no omnipotence to annul or to mutilate the property of individuals here.

The announcement of the Earl of Effingham as Governor-General of Jamaica, was made amidst the agitation of these momentous questions, and during the violence of one of those sterile disputes which the interference of one branch of the Legislature with the peculiar privileges of the other has so often occasioned. After some ineffectual efforts to conciliate the Assembly, or to influence his council, General Clarke was obliged to appeal to the sense of another body of representatives, that he might not involve his successor in the embarrassment of an empty purse.

The empires of the East were all deeply engaged, and fearfully agitated, by foreign and domestic tumults; in which, however, England still assumed no other character than that of a mediator. The French monarchy already sickened with a disease, under which it soon expired; and the shock which changed the face of Europe was felt, in no small degree, throughout the West Indies. In the island of Saint Domingo, the colonists, blind to the real state of their society, and dazzled by the splendour of the republican system of France, assumed the liberty of convening public meetings to send deputies there. In vain did Duchilleau issue proclamations to prevent the meetings, and to smother this spark of colonial republicanism before it should burst into a flame, or spread amongst the slaves. The deputies reached Versailles at the moment when the States-General declared themselves the National

Assembly—in time to hear the wild decree, "that all men are free"—a declaration which left no hope for them at least. As soon as the momentous secret was whispered in Saint Domingo, it converted the slaves, contented, and happy, under the lightest of servile fetters, into implacable enemies and savage brigands; in the event, destroying a colony whose revenue had been fourteen millions of livres, and whose fertile lands were soon drenched with tears and blood.

A revolution, marked with events of such a nature, could not take place within ninety miles of Jamaica, without exciting some feeling in a population of two hundred thousand slaves, and the utmost anxiety amongst the small proportion of their masters; while the alarm was increased by the hostile demonstrations of the Spaniards who, on the A.D. 1790. neighbouring isle of Cuba, were taking every opportunity of destroying the British commerce. The indiscriminate work of slaughter was already commenced; the cries of the wretched victims in Saint Domingo reached the shores of Jamaica; the slaves heard them; and if a dark and sullen hope of freedom found harbour in their breasts, it was quickly smothered by the example of the wretched fate which awaited the authors of such disorder, and by the humanity of their owners, which left them no chance of improvement in a change. It was in vain that the National Assembly of France, when it saw the desolation it had caused, passed a decree "That

it was never the intention to comprehend the interior government of the colonies in the constitution, which had been framed for the mother country alone; or to subject them to laws which were incompatible with their local institutions; and that they should therefore make their wishes known as to the plan of interior legislation most conducive to their prosperity." This decree was speedily and mischievously followed by another: "That *every* person of the age of twenty-five years and upwards, possessing property, or having resided two years in the colony, and paid taxes, should be permitted to vote in the formation of a Colonial Assembly."

At the distance of thirty years, it is the duty of the annalist to adopt the narrative and to use the language of contemporaries; and I am happily relieved from unprofitable labour, and the scrutiny of a distressing event, by the accurate records of an historian* whose eye contemplated the image, and whose ear collected the reports of those circumstances which rendered infamously memorable the revolution of Saint Domingo.

The people of colour in that devoted island misunderstood the decree; or, perhaps, found themselves too weak to assert the extraordinary claims it

* Bryan Edwards. It is with much regret that I cannot benefit by the perusal of a work now in the press, (1827,) Mr. Franklin's announced History of Saint Domingo: in which the well known talents of the author promise a rich fund of information and amusement.

gave them, and they despatched their deputies to the Congress to gain time or information. The General Assembly of the colony met at Saint Mark, and the inhabitants of St. Domingo were there fairly represented by two hundred and thirteen of their chosen men. But the planters of the northern districts had factiously convened an Assembly of their own, which openly opposed the proceedings of Saint Mark, whose members, it suited their purpose to declare, were sold to England. The report spread, and soon gained credit; the western parishes recalled their deputies; the inhabitants refused obedience to their decrees, and the Governor, who had views of his own, was not unwilling to dissolve them. But he found that they were supported and protected by the voice of sixty cannon on board a line-of-battle ship in the harbour, and by the arms of four hundred of the national guards within the town. The populace also armed for their support; and the Governor having joined the convention of the north, immediate preparations were mutually made to try their respective rights of legislation by the suspending chances of a civil war. Reason and reflection, however, suggested a more rational mode of interpreting the obscure decrees of France; and eighty-five of the national members embarked for Brest, to ask advice and instructions, or to justify their conduct to their monarch, while Peynier gathered up the fallen reins of government, and expectancy produced a momentary calm. That re-

pose was soon interrupted by Ogé, a man of colour, who led a formidable and well-armed band, and loudly demanded obedience to the decree which gave the privilege of *whites* to all. Fortune had left him nothing to lose, except life; and to despise life is the first qualification of a rebel. Seven hundred pikes maintained his arguments, and enforced obedience, while he pitched his camp within two miles of Cape François. The white inhabitants of that town were, however, strong enough to drive him from his position, and he sought a refuge amongst the perfidious natives of the Spanish territories, from whom he was quickly taken, placed far beyond the reach of hope, in the subterraneous dungeons of the fortress, and finally broken on the wheel.

The deputies had, in the mean time, been indignantly dismissed from the bar of the National Assembly, their powers disllowed, their claims unheard, and their persons placed under arrest; an unexpected issue of their mission, which roused to vengeance their friends in Saint Domingo. The white cockade was everywhere insulted, the national colours were pulled down, and trampled under foot by the indignant mob, and it was more than once seriously debated whether the standard of Great Britain should not supply its place. The ferment had scarcely taken the form of open and confirmed rebellion, when intelligence was received that the claims of the mulattoes had been discussed in France, and that the decree of the Abbé Grégoire had de-

A.D. 1791.

cided, "That the people of colour resident in the French colonies, and born of French parents, were entitled to the enjoyment of all the privileges of French citizens; and, amongst others, to that of voting for, and being eligible to, the benches of the senate." The faint ray of hope, which hitherto had cheered the planters of St. Domingo, was now obscured for ever; the decree united against them the great body of negroes and mulattoes, and the work of death was recommenced. The guillotine, of new invention, would have been an instrument of mercy, and saved thousands of miserable victims from the studied barbarity of their inhuman executioners. In a general massacre of the whites some were impaled by the savage hands of their own domestic slaves, others were buried alive, and hundreds were mangled and mutilated in triumph and revenge; infants were carried about transfixed on pikes, the bloody symbols of war and execution; every white person who met their swords or knives was instantly butchered; their bleeding ears were worn as favours in their woollen caps; their widows or daughters became the prey of avarice or lust; the rum flowed in torrents, to inflame the passions; and the wildest scenes of disorder were scarcely veiled in the darkness of the night; for the flames arose, and the accumulated fruits of economy and toil were the reward or destruction of the infuriated mob. The spirit of the negro is to destroy the works of the past, and the hopes of the future; for

barbarity knows no to-morrow. The buildings, the cane-fields, the very earth itself seemed on fire; during three weeks it raged unabated; the atmosphere was illuminated around the isle, and the ashes borne away by the winds fell even in Jamaica.

The slaves assumed the white insignia of royalty, which their masters had indignantly cast off; they displayed the banners, and claimed the dignity, of a regular army; and their sable leader, the cruel Jean François, decorated with a military collar, arrogated the proud title of commander of the royal forces. The officers who exercised the power, or attended the person of their general, were attired in the richest habits; they gallantly led their men, and forced the obstacles which opposed their progress to the Cape. It was an extraordinary display of negro valour; for the Africans seldom possess the resolution to meet an enemy in the open field, though none can bear with greater fortitude the pangs of hunger, the agonies of pain, or the weariness of labour, when their imagination is heated, and their resolution fixed. An innumerable host, they now, however, courted danger; they furiously assailed the outworks of the Cape, put their defenders to the sword, and the town itself narrowly escaped the ravages of a conquering barbarian. The works which defended it had been hastily, but judiciously, thrown up, when a British squadron came to its assistance. The sympathising inhabitants of Jamaica, though groaning under afflictions little less distressing, lent their

timely aid*, and offensive operations were once more attempted against the rebels. The white inhabitants of the Cape secured their own slaves by bribes or chains, and advanced with courage to meet the defiance of the insulting foe. The rear of the undisciplined multitude was insensibly surrounded, the tumultuous mass was engaged, between the horns of a crescent, into which the troops had gradually curved, and the astonished negroes were saluted on either side by the balls from three thousand well directed muskets. The ground was, in an instant, strewed with the dead, many prisoners were captured, and the survivors fled, or concealed themselves in the woods.

But twelve hundred families had already been the victims of a system, and reign, of terror which had scarcely done more mischief in the land where it originated; one hundred and eighty-two sugar plantations had been destroyed, and nine hundred and fifty settlements of indigo, or coffee, had been rooted up. The flames of rebellion spread rapidly towards the west, a hundred thousand slaves were in arms, but they refused to join the ranks of the mulattoes against the whites, whose weakness proposed and sanctioned terms of peace. A concordat was agreed upon; and

* The National Assembly of France passed a decree of thanks to the King of Great Britain, to the English nation, and to Lord Effingham, the Governor of Jamaica, for his generous conduct in relieving the planters of St. Domingo from the horrors of famine, and in furnishing them with arms and military stores, against the rebel negroes.

the white inhabitants of Port-au-Prince placed the people of colour, who had been so faithful to their cause, upon the same footing with themselves, by establishing the decree of the Abbé Grégoire. The Cape at length found it necessary to adopt the same conciliating but dangerous expedient, and a temporary calm ensued.

That fatal decree had, however, in the mean time been hastily rescinded in France: and scarcely had the truce been established, when the dangerous discovery of the repeal was made in St. Domingo. The disappointment and the rage of the mulattoes then knew no bounds; they attributed its repeal to the faithless framers of the concordat, and they unequivocally declared that their supposed betrayers, or themselves, must be exterminated from the land. They rose in a simultaneous mass throughout the island, every discontented subject, every desperate slave, might entertain a reasonable hope of subverting so weak and distracted a government; the negroes rallied once more round the standard of revolt, and they made themselves masters of Port St. Louis; nor were they repulsed from Port-au-Prince until they had destroyed more than half the town. Slaughter and defeat abated not their savage courage; one of their camps was swept away by a rapid movement of the troops; and two thousand slaves were cut down by the French cannon; while the cruelties exercised upon captives were not confined to African barbarity alone, but were the mutual means of satiating a cruel

revenge. The rack, the torture, and the dagger, were prepared on either side, and proved the active instruments of destruction. On the part of the slaves revenge embraced the moment, and secured the victim; the white women were exposed to injuries more dreadful, in the apprehension of chastity, than death itself; and a strict interpretation of the evidence of historians would swell the loss of St. Domingo to more than the sum of its entire population.

Such was the awful state of the colony when St. Leger, Roome, and Mirbeck, three Commissioners appointed by the National Assembly, arrived, to sooth or to inflame the wounds its rash decisions had so wantonly inflicted. Roome, the least objectionable of the three, was thought to embrace the cause of prudence and humanity; but his professions were ambiguous, his assistance slow and ineffectual. A general amnesty was indeed proclaimed to all who would accept it: but the hazardous, or the iniquitous expedient of again declaring an equality of rights and ranks, once more let loose a population of four hundred and fifty thousand slaves, upon less than twenty thousand owners of the soil: and the commissioners were glad to escape, as fast as possible, to France again. The National Assembly placed the decree, however, upon the bayonets of six thousand men, who disembarked at the Cape with three new Commissioners, Santhonax, Polverel, and Ailhaud. They dissolved the Colonial Assembly then sitting there; and, assuming the A.D. 1792.

reins of government, sent Blanchelande, the Governor, a state-prisoner to France, where, beneath the guillotine, he suffered the fate of all who opposed the levelling system of the French republic; while people of colour, or even negroes, were appointed to levy and collect the taxes, the appropriation of which was vested in the Commissioners alone. Ailhaud was too weak, or too virtuous, to enjoy his appointment long, and he returned to Europe, leaving without controul two cruel tyrants, who dreaded no further interference; for France was too much deluged with blood to notice the distant streams that flowed in St. Domingo.

Such is the outline of a revolution which has utterly destroyed the finest colony that Europe ever planted in the Western world, by the dissemination of wild enthusiastic principles, calculated to disturb the tranquillity of good governments, without reforming bad ones—a dreadful example to the islands around, whose population was likewise artificial. Almost within sight of the fires which lighted up the desolation of Saint Domingo, listening with intense anxiety to the servile uproar, and trembling at the neighbourhood of republican principles, Jamaica again claims our attention: for although England armed in the cause of true liberty, and poured forth her treasures, and her blood, for the restoration of order, the colony had no security to expect but from its own exertions, and chiefly depended upon that fortunate and fair condition of its slave population, which ren-

dered them contented with their state, and unwilling to exchange a mild and easy servitude for the events of a hazardous rebellion. To keep them in ignorance of what was passing so near to them was impossible, to prevent their knowledge of the ill-timed discussions in the British Parliament, and of which they were the object, was equally impracticable; and all that their masters could do was to increase their comforts with discretion, and to keep such a watch upon their actions, as should secure them against surprise. But the most painful vigilance could not prevent the arrival of many seditious characters from the neighbouring isle: the hostile approach of enemies was always feared, and sometimes felt, and both the public and the private fortunes of the country were rapidly decaying. Admiral Affleck stationed ships of war along the coast nearest to the scene of action; a military force was quartered upon each vessel, and the island was guarded by its militia to the water's edge—while every church, every house, resounded with a fearful litany, "Save us from the example of Saint Domingo, and from the daggers of our slaves."

The activity of preparation was damped by an unseasonable event, which deprived the colony of the services of the Earl of Effingham. A mournful procession of the legislative members attended his body to the grave, which had scarcely closed upon the remains of his countess; a public monument attested his popularity, and recorded his virtues; and

his memory was embalmed by the genuine sorrow of all his subjects. But the most sincere grief evaporates in the tumult of a new administration; and the eyes and acclamations of mankind are always speedily attracted by the rising sun. The reins of government fortunately fell into the hands of a man who was the favourite of the people; the Earl of Effingham was soon forgotten, and the experience of Major-General Williamson guided the detail of military operations rendered necessary for the defence of the island. Poor as it was, it was rich to the desolation which reigned so near it: and a loan of a hundred and eighty thousand pounds was eagerly solicited by the authorities of Saint Domingo, from whence Commissioners arrived with powers to pawn their island for the payment. But the real poverty of the country, if not its policy, forbade compliance; and the discussion of the proposal renewed one of those disputes which has so often divided the councils of Jamaica. The Assembly, generously willing to lend every assistance in its power, proposed a loan of ten thousand guineas, which the Council refused its assent to, intruding an opinion where no interference could be allowed; and the Governor, with less judgment than ambition, ventured to pass a formal censure upon the House for what was, at best, but a vague report of its proceedings. The judicious management of the late Earl had succeeded in holding such discussions in suspense; and the ill-defined pretensions of the legislative council, although dis-

couraged by him, had rather slept, than been suppressed: but when a public quarrel is envenomed by the remembrance of private injuries, or personal dislike, a blow that is not mortal, a termination that is not decisive, can be productive only of a truce, which allows the unsuccessful party time to sharpen his arms for a new encounter. The stronger party, the Assembly, persisted in its undoubted privilege of alone disposing of the funds of the public; while the Council was equally as obstinate in asserting claims without reason, and without the power of enforcing them. The contest might, perhaps, have been prolonged till the enemies of the island had taken advantage of it, if the petitioners, whose request had caused it, had not conceived the disputed sum insufficient, and declined the loan. The island, however, liberally supplied them with provisions, and stores; some wealthy merchants of Kingston furnished a considerable sum in money, and a partial repayment was extorted, many years afterwards, from the occasional justice of the Emperor of France. The perfidious Spaniards, who from their own territories in Saint Domingo, beheld the distress and desolation of their neighbours, not only refused their aid, but delivered up to their pursuers the wretched victims who had taken shelter in their country, and, in the event, they were fairly treated for their inhumanity.

Such was the alarming posture of affairs when Jamaica again stretched out her arms to England,

for that support which she claimed, and thought she merited. A detachment of cavalry was requested, and two additional regiments of infantry; for it was imagined that the subjects of the empire, whose lot was cast in its most distant provinces, had yet as fair a claim to protection as those who were so fortunate as to dwell beneath the shadow of its throne. Extraordinary conditions were, however, annexed to the promised reinforcement; and the island was called upon not only to provide for the troops, but to pay them all. The poverty of the country, no less than the principle of the demand, rendered the obligation inadmissible; while falsely and unfeelingly was it urged by the British minister, "that the West India proprietors must be rich in the destruction of their rivals in Saint Domingo." Upon such an unwarranted assumption the taxes and restrictions were again increased. A series of representations and complaints might, it was hoped, dart a ray of truth into the palace of Saint James; but the Royal ear was yet closed to the tales of misery with which it was assailed, although desperation lent freedom and energy to the petition, "If you will not relieve us from the calamities of commercial ruin, save us at least from the knives of our slaves, and from the swords of our common enemies." The emergency of the case compelled the Governor, at all hazards, to send for the reinforcements from Nova Scotia, and, in the event, the unfortunate planters were compelled to purchase, at a ruinous

expense, the protection of their lives, and the temporary preservation of the little property that was left to them.

At length the blow was struck which deprived France of her Monarch, and of her reason; and Santhonax, the commissioner of Saint Domingo, who possessed, in a superior degree, the virtues of a republican and a rebel, instantly changed his conduct towards the white population there. True to the prevailing principles of the times, he discarded the few owners of the soil whom he had retained in the service of the country, and selected his adherents from amongst the lowest orders of the people, admitted them to his table, bestowed upon them exclusive privileges, and appointed them to all the vacant offices of the colony. Five hundred negroes, the deserving victims of offended laws, were instantly released from prison: the gibbets were pulled down, and liberty was given to every species of revenge and cruelty. They flew upon their prey with the fierceness of the tiger; the white inhabitants, who had been hostile to the inordinate pretensions of the blacks, were plundered, seized, and thrown into subterraneous dungeons: the palace, the tribunals, the very rivers were stained with blood; and the tyrant of Saint Domingo exulted in the sufferings and execution of a thousand respectable citizens. Condemnation was seldom preceded even by the forms of trial, and punishment was embittered by the rude shouts of the slaves and the

A. D. 1793.

most exquisite refinement of African cruelty. The eyes were pierced—the tongues were torn from the mouths—the hands and feet were amputated; some expired under the lash, others in flames; others again were transfixed on pikes, and a simple, speedy death was mercy which could hardly be expected or obtained. Jealousy and resentment prevailed in every breast, and the pleasures of ample gratification were inexhaustible. Neither private virtue nor public service could expiate, in the mind of the tyrant, the guilt of active or even passive obedience to the government of his predecessors; and many persons, who were distinguished either by the offices which they had filled, or by the popular favour which they had enjoyed, were cast into dungeons, and subjected to every torture to extract a confession of their real or imaginary wealth. Port-au-Prince was attacked and taken by the infamous Santhonax, who applauded the obedience of the ocean, which involved the crews and passengers of three vessels laden with his victims in a common shipwreck. Terror preceded his progress; he found everywhere, or he left, a dreary solitude; and when no other means of gratifying his thirst for blood existed, the military executions were commenced. He there assisted at the execution of his chosen victims—surveyed their agonies, listened to their groans, and indulged, without satiating, his cruel appetite. Five hundred Frenchmen were sent on board the ships, heavily ironed, and condemned to furnish the sum of four

hundred and fifty thousand livres in three days. At length, wearied by the scene of slaughter, or finding its objects diminished to a few, he declared freedom to all in slavery, and decreed to them the full enjoyment of the rights of Frenchmen. Here, however, he found himself unexpectedly embarrassed, and new dangers instantly beset him: he had to dread the animosity of the mulattoes, whose jealousy was thus inflamed; and he could no longer trust the negroes, who were raised to his own rank, and who chose no longer to repose any confidence in him. He discovered too late that he had gone further than he had intended; he could not retrace his steps; and he could compute the number of his enemies only by the testimony of a guilty conscience, and by the daily defection of such as, in the hour of his distress, revenged their wrongs, or forgot their obligations. To escape the vengeance of the English, who were approaching from the shores of Jamaica, he escaped with the remains of a force reduced from fifteen, to one, thousand men, and fled to Port de Paix.

Such was the state of Saint Domingo after a revolution, commenced by men who, at the distance of four thousand miles, attempted to legislate for the colony, and who sanctified the cause of rebellion and revenge by the dispensing powers of fanaticism. The trembling inhabitants of Jamaica knew not how soon that fate might be their own; for the self-deluded advocates for the natural rights of negro

freedom, were not less actively employed in London than they had been in Paris. But fortunately, if the expression may be used in such a case, the rapid destruction of Saint Domingo damped their ardour, by offering a tremendous example of what their ill-timed labours might effect. As soon as the extent of the mischief was known in England, the Governor of Jamaica received instructions to support legitimate authority, and to assist in the reduction of the rebels, by taking possession of such districts of Saint Domingo as might solicit the protection of the British empire. The murder of the French King had been the signal to dismiss from the court of Saint James the ambassador of the fallen monarchy; and England flew to arms to protect her own shores from the influence of principles so destructive. The western colonies were the first objects which, after securing peace at home, occupied her anxious attention; and Martinique, Grenada, and Guadaloupe, successively felt the truth of the maxim, that the master of the seas will always acquire the dominion of the land. Saint Domingo might possibly have been attached to the British crown, had not the season of the year been unfavourable to the enterprise. General Whitelock was deceived in the nature of the service, and in the aid he expected to receive; and the hot vapours of an Indian sun infected with disease the European forces, who had already endured the vicissitudes of intemperance and famine.

A.D. 1794.

Jamaica was relieved from the serious apprehension of a severe retaliation by the brilliant victory of Lord Bridport; and the owners of her grateful soil were once more permitted to devote their attention to the occupations of profitable industry. Nor is the historian at a loss for interesting materials in that less active scene; for the arrival of a ship, which Royal munificence had devoted to the collection of exotics in the Southern ocean, will be gratefully remembered in Jamaica as long as the bread-fruit, the mango, and the China orange preserve their excellence on our tables, and lend their deep luxuriant foliage to our fields*.

The sanguinary horrors which marked the revolution of Saint Domingo, in some measure prepared the inhabitants of Jamaica for an event to which they indirectly gave occasion, and which they certainly greatly magnified; for it is probable that the Maroon war would never have taken place had not the prevailing terror of the times enlarged the scene of action, by representing the danger much more serious than it really was. The Earl of Balcarres, who arrived in the spring of 1795, had scarcely viewed the features of the country he was sent to govern, when he was called upon to act on an emergency which required the most intimate knowledge of its temper and constitution. He found the inhabitants distracted between the influence of fear, and the irritation of discontent:— A.D. 1795.

* See Note XXXVIII.

apprehensive that the terrific example of their neighbours would rouse their slaves to rebellion; and indignant that, at such a moment, their defenders should be taken from them to supply their dying comrades in the seat of war, and waste their lives in the fruitless attempt to regain a foreign land already lost to all the world. Adversity had taught them the humiliating lesson that their own resources were quite unequal to a servile war, and although they were mostly without foundation, the reports of dark plots, and ripe conspiracies, of the designing emissaries, and hostile preparations of the French republicans, were everywhere prevalent, and everywhere believed. In the inexperienced judgment of the new Governor it became necessary to allay the ferment and to conquer the alarms, rather than remove them; while to his affrighted council, no means seemed so ready as to make the prevailing terror a plea for the imposition of martial law, a measure which would sanction the retention of the troops, at the same time that it placed unlimited power in the hands of the ambitious Earl.

I desire to believe, but I dare not affirm, that the increased salary of twenty pounds a day had no influence over these deliberations; but it was at least most unfortunate for the colony, that Lord Balcarres did not blend the civil and military talents requisite for its peaceful government. Endowed with far more personal courage than political resolution, he possessed the iron temper of a soldier, without the art

or prudence of a General: his uncertain operations were capriciously framed, and violently executed, with an ignorance of the difficulties which he would have to encounter; and his conduct was calculated to increase the prevailing alarm, while his speeches to the legislative bodies breathed the most serious apprehension, accompanied with those assurances of vigilance and regard which are so easily expressed.

The efforts of power and courage, in an ample field, will always command the attention of posterity; but the events by which the fate of nations is not materially changed, leave a very faint impression on the page of history: and the details of a petty warfare begun without cause, prosecuted without glory, and terminated, if not dishonourably, at least without effect, are calculated to make but little impression on the generality of readers; especially as they have already sunk into oblivion under the pens of two able, and contemporary historians, Bryan Edwards, with his continuator, and R. C. Dallas, who has contrived to sprinkle his subject with much agreeable, but doubtful information. Wars, and the administration of public affairs, are indeed the principal subjects of history; but it is the number of persons interested in these scenes which makes the narrative pleasing or tedious. The situation of a petty colony, and the season of a civil commotion, raises almost every member of the community into action, and consequently into notice; and though the names of many who distinguished themselves in the Maroon

war of Jamaica, deserve to be engraven on the memory of their countrymen, such a particular relation would soon cease to interest. I have already exceeded the original limits of my plan, and thirty eventful years are still between me and the period of my labours. If I presume, with the same prolixity, to detail the various chances of this rebellion, the slender thread of Jamaica history would be spun to a length which the most patient reader would never take the trouble to follow to its end. Lamenting the barren superfluity of materials, the historian may, therefore, imitate the speed with which the events succeeded each other; and, in compressing the narrative of predecessors, correct the exuberance of fancy by the impartial evidence of fact.

Although the Earl had taken such extraordinary means to create a disposition which had previously existed only in the prevailing fears of the inhabitants, the slaves remained provokingly tranquil, and their masters alone seemed actuated by the spirit of discontent. The Maroons, whose strength could number no more than six hundred at the suppression of the rebellion in the year 1739, had now increased to more than double that amount; but they were quiet, and sometimes useful, obedient to the orders of their captains, and active in the pursuit of those whom they were employed to apprehend. Nor had they any thing to hope or to fear from the example which St. Domingo offered; little was required of them, and but little attention had, for some time, been

paid to them; they were nominally confined within the liberties of their respective towns, and in the affairs of the colony they took no part, and showed no interest. Their local superintendents, satisfied that they were inoffensive, if not industrious, relaxed the rigour of their proper discipline, and permitted them to range throughout the country in the peaceful character of pedlars; while their intercourse with the slaves was, in many instances, cemented by the alliance of blood, though not of interest; for in general they were implacable foes. It was conceived, however, and not without reason, that such alliances were pregnant with mischief, and that they would interfere with the active pursuit of deserters, the occupation most congenial to the temper of the Maroons, and most serviceable to the country. The legislature had the example of St. Domingo continually in view, and determined to check the habits of increasing idleness by confining them more strictly within the precincts of their respective towns. It was in the prosecution of this measure that the greatest offence was given, and it was increased by the apparent necessity for the removal of the captain of the Trelawney Maroons, whose laxity of discipline and extraordinary abilities in the service he had undertaken, had rendered him an object of the most enthusiastic regard. This naturally caused great discontent in that division of their body; and the imprudent chastisement of two of them by the hands of a negro slave, was strongly resented by those who would have

inflicted, had they been permitted, a much severer punishment upon the deserving culprits.

The principle of discord was thus awakened in their bosoms; and they dismissed, but without violence, the new superintendent who was placed over them, and to whom they attributed, in their ignorance, the misfortunes they deplored. This event was also magnified by the prevailing terror of the inhabitants; the local magistracy thought that they beheld in it the seeds of a servile war, and they lost no time in communicating their apprehensions to the inexperienced Earl. The occurrence received many additional aggravations in its passage from one parish to another, it astonished and alarmed the inhabitants throughout the island, and their imaginations enlarged the extent of a partial evil. The militia, which had been placed under arms by the proclamation of martial law, immediately moved forward to the supposed scene of action, and were met in the woods by a Maroon of exquisite symmetry, and noble address, who descended the side of the mountain with the step of an antelope, and giving a wild and graceful flourish to his lance, presented a letter requesting a conference with the chief magistrate of the district, and with certain other individuals whom it named. The proposal was accepted, and their complaints were heard. They were easily soothed by the promises they received; the mediators were confident in the speedy redress of their trifling grievances; and they parted with mutual good will, cementing the

reconciliation, shortly after, by a formal renewal of the compact, and consecrating it by the baptism of the children in their mountain town. Strong and repeated applications were made to the Governor to satisfy their reasonable anxiety, by the re-appointment of Captain James, their favourite superintendant;* but they were all unheeded; and the intemperate Earl seemed determined to find a reason for the use of arms.

The small band of Trelawney Maroons, however, stood alone: unsupported by any of their own class throughout the island, and detested by all the slaves around them, yet they had the fullest confidence that, when the Legislature assembled, their grievances would be all redressed; and they therefore readily obeyed the mandate of the Lieutenant-Governor to send their confidential leaders to the capital, there to make their formal submission to his person. Unfortunately that order had been delayed; but the moment they received, they hastened to obey it: a wild, neglected race of people, they knew nothing of the foreign destination of the European regiments; and the transactions of Saint Domingo scarcely supplied them with a thought: they acted merely on the impulse of the moment, and were tumultuous, or submissive, according to the simple ascendancy of their passions. They had, however, ignorantly braved the authorities to which they ought to be subject, and it became necessary to make them feel their dependance: they had felt it; and the dictates of policy and humanity alike concurred in the expe-

* Journals of Assembly, vol. ix. page 370.

diency of rendering them happy and contented in their situation. Martial law had, however, been established upon other principles, and for other reasons; and it became necessary to find some better cause for that proceeding than the mere vague alarms of the terrified inhabitants. The Earl set out, therefore, with all the parade of war, for the only district in his government which could afford his activity a pretext; while he ordered the troops to change their destination from Saint Domingo to Montego Bay.

A.D. 1795. Aug. 4th.

The want of proper passports, or suspicions which were never, however, satisfactorily proved, caused the detention of the Maroon deputies who were hastening to Saint Jago to confirm their allegiance, or, as some supposed, to raise the standard of revolt amongst their brethren in the East. The Earl met them in Saint Ann, approved the measure, and ordered them to be heavily ironed, and securely lodged. Thence proceeding to the neighbourhood of their town, he informed the ignorant and dispersed Maroons that their mountain passes were all securely guarded by thousands of his men; that he would set a value on their heads if they did not in three days deliver themselves into his hands;—and then moving up large bodies of his troops, he effectually *made* a seat of war. The Maroons, deprived of their counsellors and chosen captains, to whom alone they could safely confide the charge of negotiation, and of whose arrest they soon had tidings,

were surprised to find their wood-girt town surrounded by an armed force of twelve hundred men, themselves declared rebels, and deprived of all means of concerting measures either for their safety or submission: while the Earl, totally unacquainted with their local situation, with their character, their mode of warfare, or the nature of the ground which he had chosen for the scene of action, declared his intention "of losing no time in temporising measures,"* but to crush the presumed rebellion in its birth. Thus taken by surprise, the barbarians were divided in their councils—the elder, and more prudent, evincing a desire for peace, and submission; the active, and more brave, desiring only to be led to war, and to revenge. The want of faith, exemplified in the unwarranted detention of their deputies, gave them however too much reason to apprehend that none would be observed towards those who might submit; and the violent measures of the Lieutenant-Governor, who was new to their acquaintance, left them but little to expect from his humanity or justice. In their despair and ignorance, they looked upon their wild rocks, and woods, and fondly fancied that they were impregnable to their pampered oppressors. Then perhaps they first thought of gaining the neighbouring slaves to join them in their provoked defence; but the thought soon vanished, when they reflected on the implacable hatred which divided them from such friendly aid; and they dis-

* Dallas's Maroon War, p. 175.

patched their most trusty emissaries to summon such Maroons as, in the laxity of discipline, had been permitted to settle at a distance with their families; while they all seized their arms, and hid their ammunition in the rocks and caverns. Condemned for years to a life of tranquillity and labour, their distant friends flew from their obscure plantations at the first blast of the well-known horn, and eagerly resumed the arms which they had almost forgotten the use of. Yet although they came pouring in to the parent settlement, the great majority still advised submission. But when they beheld the bayonets of their enemies glittering in the sun, and thick set upon the wood-clad hills around; when they heard the echo of the military bugles, and listened to the distant random shot vainly aimed at their destruction, they felt their situation desperate; their warlike ardour was roused, and, with fearful apprehension, they hastened back to their scattered settlements, to hide or to protect their wives and children. With horror and indignation, they discovered that their houses and gardens had been destroyed in their absence, their families hunted into the woods, and some of their relations missing. Their vengeance then became natural, and their retaliation just. But, in the meantime, Montague, their aged leader, had tried the pacific measure which the Lieutenant-Governor had commanded, and, with thirty-seven of his best and ablest marksmen, had surrendered to the Earl. They declared their unreserved submission, and that their comrades waited only to see the result of their

experiment, to follow their example. But the blindest policy, or the most culpable ignorance, instigated Lord Balcarres to bind them hand and foot, and to throw them into prison, where one of them, more alive than his companions to his expected fate, drew his knife, and plunged it in his heart. Two were afterwards released, and sent into the woods to hasten the submission of the rest; but their report, as might have been expected, produced an effect far different. The main body of the Maroons, indignant at this additional proof of want of faith, instantly set fire to their scattered towns, collected all their strength, and fled into the deepest woods. The courage and unanimity of their enemies were not so great as theirs:—the councils of the Earl were materially divided; many considered the proclamation of martial law as totally uncalled for; and more condemned the provocations which led to a contest now become inevitable.

Such were the cause and commencement of a rebellion wherein less than three hundred barbarians, secure in their native woods and mountains, were the objects, and sometimes the assailants, of fifteen hundred chosen European troops, assisted by more than twice that number of colonial militia. It would require the utmost efforts of the pencil, rather than the descriptive powers of the pen, to explain the mystery of its continuance during four long and sanguinary months, in which the chances were generally in favour of the Maroons, the tactics singular, and

distressing to the troops: for it cannot be concealed that, where the former were deprived of one man, the latter had to lament the loss of thirty. Two of their engagements defied indeed alike the pencil of the artist, and the pen of the historian; they threw the country into mourning and dismay, and their nature, as far as the detail could be collected from the panic-struck survivors, will exemplify the usual occurrences of this extraordinary contest.

The habitations of the Maroons were so placed as to form two distinct towns, about half-a-mile asunder, and in the very heart of an alpine country, where the mountains, heaped upon each other in wild confusion, present to the eye the deepest foliage, interspersed with towering precipices of barren rock. It was upon the rugged acclivity of one of the highest ridges that the houses, or rather huts, were irregularly scattered, each on its insulated point of rock, the intermediate channels, of natural formation, preserving it from the autumnal torrents; while a narrow defile, confined within impending precipices, afforded an easy but defensible communication between the two friendly settlements. Both situations were cool and healthy; the soil of the vallies was rich and productive; and abundance of water was supplied by a neighbouring stream. The morning air was mingled with the fragrance of a thousand aromatic shrubs, and with a thick and fleecy fog, which arose during the night from the innumerable glades around, presenting to the eye an undulating sea of snowy white-

ness, through which the mountains broke as islands in the ocean. Between the opening rocks, or down the wooded vales, the eye reached the bright and level scenery below, where the expanse of verdant cane-fields was enlivened by the scattered manufactories of their luscious juice; the distant town bounded the landscape, and the bays and promontories, wooded to the verge, broke abruptly upon the ocean, over which, in clearest weather, were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the lofty hills of Cuba.

Such was the rugged seat of war: for Lord Balcarres established his head-quarters within two miles of the desolated towns, and the troops formed a crescent on his rear. Impetuous and uninformed, he ordered a detachment to occupy the provision grounds, which he presumed must be situate somewhere behind the furthest settlement, and then to wheel upon that town while he assailed the rebels from the other. As soon as the troops began to move, the woods echoed with the signal horns, and they sometimes caught a glimpse of the Maroons watching their progress from the opposite heights; but they everywhere found a solitude on their approach; and the detachment took quiet possession of the smoking ruins, seeking, but in vain, for the cultivated gardens they were ordered to destroy. Thus disappointed in the object of their mission, and imagining that the Earl was already in possession of the town nearest to his quarters, Colonel Sandford

resolved to pass through the defile, and join him there. The Maroons were still invisible, no vestige of their neighbourhood was perceived, and no danger was apprehended: but they were at hand, concealed behind the rocks, and in the wilderness of trees which closed upon the narrow path. They suffered the column to proceed nearly to the centre of the pass, when a volley was poured from the rocks on either side, succeeded by a rolling fire, which gave the melancholy notice of their presence. No bravery could withstand the treacherous attack of so concealed a foe,—the gallant Colonel fell at the head of his detachment, and the few survivors fled in irretrievable confusion from their shouting but still unseen assailants. Unfortunately they found not the promised succour which they sought; no Earl, no troops were there. Through the darkness of the night and terror of the scene, they were compelled to seek their way to the quarters of their commander, who, on account of some trivial accident, had never moved, and whose lamentable want of information had led to the unfortunate result. Of their enemies not one had yet been visible, and not one was hurt throughout the day; nor were the reports of cruelty, exercised upon the fallen, true. Those who were killed were found, some weeks afterwards, upon the ground on which they had fallen: the disabled crawled into the caves and thickets, around the scene of slaughter, and there perished in their helpless misery; while such as were but slightly wounded, expired through

fatigue and loss of blood, in the vain attempt to join their comrades. The event was sufficiently disastrous, without the attempt to wound the feelings of the surviving by the ill-timed report of barbarities which certainly were never practised*.

The Maroons, elated with their victory, scarcely visited the field of slaughter, but instantly fell back, and occupied a defile more difficult and more distant, whose entrance was closed in such a manner by the hand of nature, as to render it almost inaccessible. From thence they watched the movements of their disheartened enemies, upon whose heads the heavens now daily poured the torrents which they themselves regarded not. The autumnal rains were heavy and unremitted; attracted by the woods and mountains, the clouds discharged sheets of water upon the astonished Europeans, while sickness and discontent soon relaxed the nerves of military discipline. The Earl, ignorant of the country to which his wary enemies had fled, sent a field-piece to command the woods around their towns, during the laborious transport of which amidst the rocks, the Maroons were often so near him as to hear his conversation, and discover his intentions. He then advanced within a mile of their impenetrable retreat, and resigning the command to Colonel Fitch, hastened to his capital to meet the members of the legislature.

* See Note XXXIX.

His orders were to clear the woods, and inclose the enemy by a cordon of troops, in the hope of starving them into submission; but his humane successor pursued a plan much better calculated to bring the contest to a speedy and satisfactory conclusion. As soon as the Earl had departed, the Maroons confided so far in the character of Colonel Fitch, who united to the most intrepid bravery the more useful qualifications of prudence and discretion, as to enter into amicable converse from the heights above his quarters. He immediately withdrew his sentries, showed signs of the utmost confidence, invited them to parley, and at the first conference received their assurances that they were desirous of surrendering, provided they might hope for better terms than had been granted to their submissive friends in chains. Aware of the disposition of his commander, the Colonel dared not promise any terms; but he proposed a truce, and permitted two of their body to pass through his lines, and have free access to their imprisoned comrades. They had in the mean time been placed on board the shipping for security; and when the two deputies found them, as they conceived, on their way to banishment,—which above every evil they seemed most to dread,—they returned to their defile, in utter despair; the friendly intercourse instantly was closed, and they all silently but resolutely prepared to shed the last drop of their blood rather than to leave their native land.

No other alternative was then left than to force

them in their retreat; and to give effect to the artillery, the surrounding forests were cleared by innumerable slaves, who were glad to show in any way their hatred of the Maroons, and who in return were often surprised and slaughtered by their watchful foes. The outposts of the army were advanced, and the intrepid Colonel, who on all occasions of danger inspired and guided the valour of his troops, was induced to expose his person, and exert his abilities, to secure a good position for an inferior officer; and for this purpose he pressed forward with a few followers into the deep and trackless forests. As he proceeded with incautious step, and in defiance of the warning of his more wary guides, who found in various places the dying embers of Maroon fires, his progress was impeded by mountains rising in almost alpine height, while the country at every step became more gloomy and impervious. Presently he was cautioned by an invisible friend, "Pursue no farther; no force can enter here; no white man has ever gone beyond this glade." His dauntless spirit was not, however, to be thus intimidated, and he pursued about a hundred yards the narrow semblance of a path, when suddenly a tremendous volley was poured upon him from a hundred guns concealed amongst the rocks around. In vain did his surviving followers direct their fire into the thickest smoke which hung amongst the trees: the balls were buried only in their trunks, or glanced innoxious from the rocks. After the first discharge,

the brave Colonel was found seated on a fallen tree, his arm supported by a projecting bough, and his head resting on his hand. His blood was trickling down from the middle of his waistcoat, and the linen jacket which he wore was protruded by a broken rib, which pierced his flesh. He was mortally wounded; Colonel Jackson seized his hand which hung motionless at his side, "It is Jackson, your friend, look at me!" The wounded man raised his head in speechless agony, and received the assurance of his comrade that he should not fall alive into the hands of the Maroons, Jackson at the same time drawing a dagger from his bosom, and declaring his intentions to die rather than to quit him. At that instant the clicking of their guns announced that the Maroons concealed around them were preparing for another volley; Jackson called to the soldiers to lie down, and they escaped; but Fitch resisted the efforts of his friend to cover his body, a ball penetrated his forehead, and he fell lifeless.

While the troops were thus enduring all the sufferings incident to a contest carried on by ambush, in a wilderness of woods and mountains, and against a handful of simple barbarians, who required only the common assurances of good faith to lay down their arms, the Governor was attempting to prove to his assembled senators, "that hostility had long been premeditated by the Maroons at the instigation of the French Convention; that the conspiracy had been frustrated before it was ripe; that the insolent

conduct of the rebels had given him the advantage of acting with celerity and vigour; that the troops had stormed, and carried the country, dispossessed the enemy of their towns, and driven them to their rugged and barren fastnesses, where they could subsist only as a band of robbers."* The legislature lent a credulous ear to the various reports which apprehension alone gave rise to, listened to the pompous declamation of the Earl, and instantly ordered all Frenchmen to quit the island: prices were fixed upon the heads of the rebels, and the services already performed were liberally rewarded. But the unequal war rolled onward from the confines of the woods into the interior of the island: fresh troops were ordered up; the Maroons were driven from their inaccessible retreat by the tremendous operation of shells; unwearied gallantry was displayed by the assailants, the most unshaken resolution by the assailed; and, at length, in a lucky moment, it was suggested to work upon the well-known fears of the barbarians by the use of dogs. From Cuba was sought, and obtained, the assistance of habitual chasseurs, who, in the mountains of Besucal, and in their country's service, are employed, with their trained blood-hounds, in the pursuit of the numerous banditti which infest that island.

The chasseurs arrived: the leashes of the hounds were never slipped†, but the terror which their

* Journals of Assembly, vol. ix. p. 367.

† See Note XI.

approach inspired effected more than the arms of ten thousand warriors; and the Maroons hastened to capitulate upon any terms. General Walpole had succeeded to the command of the troops, and the simple terms which he proposed were instantly acceded to by the deputies sent to treat; "that they should, on their knees, beg his Majesty's pardon; that they should occupy in peace and subjection whatever lands the Governor might think proper to allot them; and that they should deliver up all the slaves who had deserted to their standard." The festival of Christmas was near at hand, the season of relaxation and disorder amongst the negroes, and the anxiety of the General to extinguish the embers of rebellion, before that period should arrive, induced him to engage and ratify, by the solemn obligation of an oath, that if they submitted immediately, upon the terms proposed, they should not be banished from the island. But here he certainly exceeded his powers, and consulted not his commander's temper, although the more prudent and experienced thought he acted right. The Earl hastened to the spot, that he might ratify the terms; but the imaginary apprehensions of the Maroons, who dreaded him almost as much as the hounds, the real difficulty of collecting their scattered body, and the time required by the ignorant barbarians to communicate the information to each other, detained them beyond the day appointed for their surrender. Impatient of the delay, for

Dec. 1.

which he would listen to no excuse, the Lieutenant-Governor again ordered the hounds into the woods, when the terrified rebels resigned themselves as speedily as they could reach his quarters; yet he made their temporary failure a plea to infringe the article of the treaty by far the most important in their consideration, and with their six captains in confinement in Saint Ann, they were all banished to Nova Scotia, where a succession of difficulties opposed their settlement*, and they were finally removed to Sierra Leone.

The first moment of public safety is usually devoted to gratitude and joy; the second is often occupied by reproach or envy. General Walpole, whose prudence and humanity had done more than the bravery or violence of the Earl of Balcarres would probably ever have effected; who had obeyed, with sedulous exactitude, all the vague and hasty orders of his commander, and patiently submitted to all his peevish reproofs, found himself placed in a situation which his strict sense of honour rendered most distressing: for he could no longer hold his commission, nor receive the sword the country voted to him, when he found his inability to maintain those terms which he had so solemnly pledged himself to see fulfilled. The House of Assembly refused to hear him in behalf of the treaty which he considered it his duty to guarantee, asserting that the

* Journals of the Assembly, p. 134, &c.

paramount interest of the colony called for the removal of the Maroons; and by this act of patriotic perfidy the service lost an honest and a gallant soldier*.

* See Note XLI.

## Chapter XVI.

Continuation of the War in the West Indies.—Black Troops forced upon Jamaica.—Repeated acts of Fiscal avidity exercised by the British Cabinet.—Consequences of the projected abolition of the Slave Trade.—Rebellion of the Slaves.—Evacuation of St. Domingo.—French Conspiracy.—Change of Governors.—Peace of Amiens.—Fresh demands upon Jamaica.—Rapid decline of the Colony.—Renewal of Hostilities.

[A.D. 1796—1805.]

To encourage agriculture, and, by an equal and moderate assessment, to increase the revenue without increasing the taxes, are the pleasing duties of the monarch, in which he finds an ample and immediate reward. But it is the same mischievous policy that drove America from the bosom of her parent, which has bent Jamaica to the earth, and the Indian, who fells the tree that he may gather the fruit*, is actuated by the impulse of a nature little less savage than that of the minister who sacrifices, to a transient gain, the lasting and secure possession of the most important revenues. The estates in Jamaica had long been deeply mortgaged, their expenses were heavy, their profits precarious: an existing debt pressed hard upon the revenue; and the wretched argument of a distracted cabinet, that the taxes upon her agricultural produce fell upon the consumer, and not

* L'Esprit des Loix, lib. 5. c. 13.

upon the planter, was annihilated by abundant proof that the imposts were already raised far above the means, or the inclination of the purchaser. Still, however, additional burdens were continually heaped upon the land; the mischief was dreadful and perennial; and if a momentary calm in the heavens relieved the agriculturist from the horrors of the hurricane, it was supplied by such tempests of fiscal avidity as almost sunk the little bark of Jamaica.

The bitter politics of the British Cabinet, during the latter years of the revolutionary war of France, may, in some measure, explain the cause of that oppression which fell so heavily upon the Western colonies. The eloquence and lynx-eyed vigilance of Fox and Sheridan bestowed upon the extraordinary experiments of Pitt and Dundas no little reproach for the management and consequences of the West Indian war. The recall of the troops from the destructive climate, and useless occupation of St. Domingo, was a measure loudly called for by the people, who are always disposed to accuse the justice or the policy of an unsuccessful contest; and anything which might remove the extraordinary expenses of it from England to those distant possessions whose cries could not so promptly reach the throne, was attentively listened to and eagerly embraced. The history of the West Indies affords indeed a remarkable instance of colonial contention; for, whenever hostilities have commenced between any of the great powers of Europe, the Charibean sea has instantly

been stained with blood; and so determined was the British minister to maintain this system in the present instance, that when it was discovered that the troops of the more northern latitudes could not endure the heats and distempers incident to a vertical sun, he resolved to carry on the war by regiments of negroes bought from slavery, whose constitution and habits might enable them to withstand the effects of a climate under which all other men dissolved. Rather than relinquish an inglorious contest, which Nature herself seemed almost to forbid, these regiments were raised amidst innumerable difficulties, and one of them was obstinately quartered upon Jamaica, in defiance of the earnest remonstrances of the inhabitants, who represented, with great truth, that an army of negroes filled with the pride of their profession, and in the midst of a slave population of their own expatriated countrymen, would be dangerous to the tranquillity of the island, and totally subversive of the present inevitable system of colonial subordination*. It was not, it could not be denied, that the measure was most hazardous and impolitic; and that the utmost vigilance would be required to keep the interior forests of the country free from an armed and terrible banditti; but the British Cabinet was obstinately deaf upon the subject, as soon as it was dis-

* That the fears of the colonists were not without foundation, it may be recorded, that, in the year 1803, the 8th West India regiment mutinied in Dominica; and in 1808, the 2nd Black regiment shot their officers in Jamaica.

covered that the natural alarm of the colonists might be turned to account, by extorting the offer of an alternative which would relieve it of an expense that was a constant source of invective and reproach.

The colony had pledged itself, in the year 1773, to provide such additional subsistence as might be required for a protecting force not exceeding three thousand men. That pledge it had long since amply redeemed; for when the revolution of St. Domingo threatened to annihilate the neighbouring colonies, Jamaica was compelled to submit to a further imposition of expense to preserve, from a formidable and successful foe, those territories and revenues, which contributed in no small degree to the defence of Great Britain herself. And now, to free themselves from the presence of a body of armed savages, a promise was wrung from the fears of the inhabitants, to maintain two thousand white troops at their sole expense; and at the expiration of five or nine years, to give them lands, and settle them in the interior of the country, provided the black troops were immediately withdrawn. In the hope of extorting something more, the regiment was, however, forced upon the island; and the minister condescended to flatter the colony with his conviction that "its candour and justice (it is the Duke of Portland who speaks) stood upon too solid and well tried a ground to be shaken by the pressure of temporary difficulties:" in short, that no objection would be made by the sickly child to relieve its sturdy parent from part of an intolerable load by

retaining the twentieth regiment of dragoons as a permanent part of its military establishment*. After an active trial of ten years, it had been proved that cavalry was not the species of force calculated for the protection of the island, and a resolution was therefore adopted, that unless it were dismounted, the regiment would no longer be provided for by the annual grant of money. These military arrangements, instances of the most greedy oppression which a parent could exercise upon its offspring, were, for a time, adjusted by an offer, on the part of the former, of two battalions of the sixtieth regiment; and no alternative was left but to accept it—although the anxious desire of the colonists to strengthen their country by the eventual settlement of the troops, was wantonly frustrated by the condition that they were to be changed at the pleasure of the king. To any other arrangement the ministers of England seemed resolutely deaf: the twentieth regiment of dragoons still remained an annual burthen on the colony; the black troops continued to harass the country by their presence; and all that the Assembly could do was to express its anxious hope that the welfare of Jamaica would be so far consulted, as that the removal of the promised battalions, when they should become enured to the service and the climate, might not be decreed, except upon the most pressing emergency.

* See the Duke of Portland's letter, and the reply of the Assembly in the 553d and 608th pages of the ninth volume of the Journals of the Assembly.

France had, in the meantime, forced the abject King of Spain into an alliance with her own dissolute state and government; Santhonax threatened an attack upon Jamaica; the sea swarmed with hostile feluccas, whose construction enabled them to elude the pursuit of the British cruisers; and a banditti of emancipated slaves issued from every port of Cuba and Saint Domingo. The trade of Jamaica was thus destroyed, until the interest and assiduity of the merchants of Kingston invented a mode of once more opening their market to the necessities of the Spaniards, by means of licenses granted by the British authorities, and not discouraged by those of Spain, who so materially benefited by the extraordinary artifice. Yet although a partial benefit accrued to the interests of trade, the island was quickly drained of the wealth which flowed in so contracted a channel, by the consequences of the deplorable contest which was still maintained in Saint Domingo, and by the increasing imposts, which fell like a tempest on the land. The hardship of the case was rendered still more apparent by the relative situation of England and Jamaica; for while every measure which ingenuity could devise was adopted by the former to rid herself of the burdens which oppressed her, the latter was not only left to struggle against the violence of the tempest, but was loaded in proportion to the relief which the mother country obtained,—as if the sugar-cane were possessed of virtues to resist every species of taxa-

tion. The complaints of the planters were accompanied by the most convincing proofs of their truth and justice; that ruin stared them in the face; that their properties were falling into the hands of the merchants; and that the consequent absence of proprietors would hasten, as it really has, the downfal of Jamaica. They urged, in the language almost of desperation, the extraordinary impolicy and hardship of taking away a right which had hitherto been held out to them as sacred,—that of counterbalancing the increasing duties, by affording an opportunity for exporting to foreign countries the surplus beyond the home consumption, so as to give, in foreign markets, such advantages to the exporters of British produce, as neutral countries enjoyed in the same markets. Until the ruinous system of reducing the *drawbacks* was adopted, the most beneficial effects had accrued to the British agriculturist, whenever an increase of importation, much exceeding the home consumption, occurred; and encouragement was thus afforded whenever the prices in the British market suffered any considerable depression. But every representation or remonstrance from the suffering colonies, as usual, was in vain; for persuasion is the resource of the weak, and the weak can seldom persuade. The relentless grasp of fiscal avidity was not an instant relaxed; and ministers thought it enough to reply that the colonists had no reason to complain, for that if they had not already made their fortunes, it was their own fault. The blind impolicy of their

conduct was not felt by them until a further reduction of the *drawbacks* was made, under the erroneous idea, that, as foreigners could not dispense with sugar, and as England was their only market, they might be compelled to bear a portion of the duties. But it was then discovered that the trifling saving which was made by the plan so thoughtlessly adopted, was heavily counterbalanced by the diminished sale of sugar, and the consequent distress of the planter.

Unfortunately for the cause of justice and Jamaica, the elaborate reports which emanated from the colonial assemblies were, at this period of excitement, usually coupled with an unpopular, but faithful representation of the effect which the abolition of the slave trade would inevitably have upon the agriculture of the colony. Vast tracts of country were still lying waste for want of labourers: many thousand acres of the richest land, amidst the glades and mountains of the interior, offered, and still offer, not only an ample maintenance, but both health and wealth to the industry of the husbandman: upon such a population the existence of the colony would depend, in the event of any serious commotion amongst the slaves; yet the projected measure of abolition, it was argued, must put a stop to the progress of cultivation; the hope of acquiring property would be at an end; and the slaves on the smaller settlements, it was truly anticipated, must fall into the possession of the more opulent planters. All that is human must retrograde if it do not advance;

the land which had been cultivated would be thus abandoned to the wild growth of nature, and a colony, still in its infancy, would be subjected to all the evils which usually attend only upon long service and decrepitude. The genuine enthusiasm of the British nation was not, however, to be checked in its humane career by considerations so partial as these; but they marked an important era in the decline and fall of Jamaica. The deadly experiment of the Sierra Leone was yet to be made; the trial of free labour offered a fair and opening prospect to the sanguine abolitionist, who was ignorant of the negro character; and a representation of the distress prevailing in Jamaica, which concluded with anything like an obstacle to the favourite scheme, which it was fondly hoped would civilize the wilds of Africa, met with the fate which, in such a temper of the British nation, might have been naturally expected.

The island, which had so often suffered by the convulsions of nature, was now again visited by one of those disasters which arise from the disorders or the carelessness of man; and the town of Montego Bay, its second commercial capital, suffered a conflagration which involved two-thirds of it in one common ruin. The sparks flew from a forge amongst some packages of straw, the flames spread rapidly to the wharfs and warehouses, and the provident demolition of the Court-house alone checked their progress; yet not until the loss amounted to half a

million of money, and hundreds of miserable objects contemplated the ruin of their fortunes. Individual distress was almost forgotten in the generous impulse to relieve the sufferers; large subscriptions were raised throughout the island; and the town soon rose again more beautiful and prosperous from its smoking ruins. The year 1798 was also pregnant with alarms of a still more serious and extensive nature; and the negligence of the public administration was betrayed by new disorders which arose, as usual, from the smallest beginnings, though threatening the most important consequences. The dangerous spirit of desertion so prevalent among the slaves, and so little attended to by the public authorities of the island, again peopled the woods with a formidable banditti, which, instead of seeking safety in concealment, infested the lower regions of the Trelawney mountains, rushed upon the neighbouring settlements, and committed the usual acts of African barbarity. They rapidly increased in confidence and numbers, and soon became so formidable as to excite the greatest alarm throughout the island. Had not the impetuosity of Lord Balcarres been cooled by experience, and his experience matured by action, he would probably have treated this rebellion in a much more serious light than that of the Maroons. But the fatal consequences of his former rashness were too recent to be forgotten; and instead of relying upon the advice of his council alone, the Earl prudently convened the Assembly, which armed

several companies of trusty negroes, under the command of white officers, and at the same time authorized the equipment of three companies of Indians, and free persons of colour, which, with the assistance of the Accompong Maroons, scoured the forests, reduced the rebels, or drove them into their interior recesses, where they could be heard of no longer. The event was satisfactory to the thoughtless; but the wary colonist saw, and still sees, the danger which lurks beneath the garb of present security, and laments the supineness of the legislature, which allows a dangerous body of at least ten thousand barbarians to remain in a state where civilization can never reach them, and where the liberty they have taken enables them to evade the laws.

The little time that was left to the unfortunate planters before the threatened abolition of the slave-trade should reduce their scanty means of agriculture within limits which they never contemplated, was judiciously taken advantage of by a legislative decree, imposing heavy duties on all negroes who should be imported above the age of twenty-five years. This provident enactment soon brought into the island so large a proportion of young and active Africans, that the effective strength of the labouring class was not only considerably augmented, but to the benevolent a reasonable hope was afforded, that the flexible nature of youth would be more readily trained to habits of morality and religion, than could the fixed and stubborn nature of the adult barbarians.

To prove that there was really an earnest desire in the breasts of the planters to instil into the minds of their slaves the pure doctrines of Christianity, it need only be mentioned, that the opportunity was taken immediate advantage of by the legislature to increase the means of instruction by the erection of more churches; by augmenting the duties and the salaries of the clergy; and by securing the benefits of a regular establishment, under the peculiar charge of commissaries appointed by the crown*.

The reader who has followed me thus far through the continued scene of calamity, oppression, and distress, which reduced a rich and flourishing colony to the abject state in which it already must be viewed, will scarcely credit that, if it really possessed the ability, it should still retain the wish, to relieve by a voluntary sacrifice its unrelenting oppressor. Yet a spirit of natural affection was still alive in the bosom of the offspring, and history records with pleasure the creditable fact that individual subscriptions were raised by the distressed inhabitants of Jamaica to assist Great Britain in carrying on the war against revolutionary France. Perhaps it is almost a solitary instance of that patriotic enthusiasm which is the inheritance of Britons, and which could excite a weak and injured colony to heap coals of fire upon the head of the government, with no suspicion of any selfish benefit in view.

An experiment without success, and a mortality

* See Note LXII.

without example, at length convinced the British cabinet, after a powerful effort of five years continuance, that the evacuation of Saint Domingo was become indispensable. There had ever been much less to hope than to fear from the chance of arms there: the scanty reinforcements from England were destined only for the hospital or the grave; the undertaking became every day more difficult, the event more doubtful, and the possession more precarious and less beneficial. Several millions of money, and the lives of many thousands of the bravest soldiers, had been wasted in the attempt to reduce under the British dominion a few insignificant posts in an island defended by twenty-five thousand soldiers, and more than forty thousand armed slaves; and it was in vain that the ministers who advised the measure attempted to prove the policy of making the war against France a colonial contest, or that the possession of Saint Domingo was the only security for the preservation of Jamaica. A treaty was signed by General Maitland and Toussaint l'Ouverture; Saint Domingo was abandoned, and its inhabitants were left to their miserable fate. The characters of Toussaint, and the French commissioner, Roume, were then exemplified, in an attempt at treachery which shows the reigning principles of the times. The former had paid a visit of ceremony to the quarters of the British General, where he was received with military honours, and at a table sumptuously covered; it was even deemed

expedient to present him with a splendid service of plate, and a magnificent apparel of furniture for his house. The visit was returned, and Toussaint was advised by the perfidious commissioner to seize the person of his guest *as an act of duty to the republic.* General Maitland received secret information of the treacherous proposal; but he found his confidence in the honour of the Governor not misplaced, for Toussaint put into his hand two unsealed letters; "There," said he, "before we talk, read these, one from the French Commissary, the other my reply; I could not see you till I had written it, that you might be satisfied how safe you are with me."

The negro regiments, embodied by General Williamson, were disbanded in Saint Domingo; and the remnant of the British army embarked for Jamaica, where the utmost alarm was spread by the extraordinary influx of emigrants who fled from the horrors of the revolution, and more especially by the multitude of slaves, who adhered to the ruined fortunes of their masters, rather than participate in the crimes which, though emanating from the French republic, offended the humanity even of these barbarous Africans. The misfortunes of the expatriated royalists called forth the warmest sympathy, and the most prompt assistance, from the inhabitants of Jamaica; and Lord Balcarres advocated their cause with more feeling than prudence: but the continuance of so many foreigners in an island feebly protected, and so much distressed, however liberal it might be in

theory, could not be admitted in practice, without endangering the tranquillity of a community where a spark of republicanism, falling upon a combustible body of nearly three hundred thousand slaves, would produce a conflagration which a present example had proved could never be extinguished. A vigilant police had, however, been established at Port Royal; and its assiduity afforded that prompt information which enabled the Lieutenant-Governor to discriminate between those negroes, or people of colour, who had borne arms, and those who had been employed in the labours of the field, in Saint Domingo. Of the former, a large proportion was armed, and accoutred, as a British corps, not however to be employed in Jamaica:—of the latter, nearly all were ultimately removed to Martinique or Trinidad.

The wealthy town of Kingston had long since increased to a vast extent: it covered one of the most beautiful spots upon the earth; its trade and commerce were encouraged by the local advantages of its situation, and improved by the political state of the European powers; and a very numerous population was now increased by the evacuation of the neighbouring isles. The existing laws became, therefore, inadequate to the maintenance of good order in such a capital, and the repeated alarms of conspiracy rendered it necessary to establish a more efficient police, adapted to any exigencies which might arise. It was consequently decreed the powers of a corporation, and the honours of a city:—a Mayor, twelve

Aldermen, and as many members of a Common Council, were elected; their public acts were ratified by a civic seal; and the benefits which accrued upon the change of system were soon apparent in the order and improvement of the commercial capital of the West.

So little, however, did the British government consult the interests, or seek to conciliate the affection of its subjects in Jamaica, that it ordered the French garrisons, which had surrendered in St. Domingo, to be immediately conveyed to its shores. The history of oppression which has been exercised upon this colony will naturally lead us to suspect that such an order was given in the expectation that the alarm of the inhabitants would extort a gratuitous provision for the speedy removal of its cause to Europe; and such a suspicion will receive additional strength from the circumstance, that the Admiral on the station was restrained, by positive instructions, from hiring any vessels to transport them thither. As might be expected, the presence of an army, twice as strong as their own, spread the greatest alarm amongst the colonists; but a hundred thousand pounds were required to remove it. The Assembly perceived the stratagem, and when the demand was formally made by the impatient Governor, it was decidedly refused. The House was consequently prorogued with intemperance, to meet again with feelings of disgust and indignation. It vindicated its own character and inherent privileges, enume-

rated the various sums which had been extorted from the fears of the inhabitants by the refusal of protection against a common enemy, and by the perennial increase of fiscal avidity; and it branded the conduct of the Earl with the harsh epithets of arbitrary rashness, and unconstitutional finesse. The Senate was justified; and it was victorious: but scarcely had the subject been set at rest, when another source of alarm was opened by information that the French in St. Domingo were preparing to retaliate on Jamaica by a revolutionary visit.

On surrendering the British posts, General Maitland had stipulated with Toussaint that a commissioner should be allowed to reside there, for the purpose of regulating and protecting a trade which, it was hoped, might still be maintained to the advantage of each island. A military man was naturally objected to by the wary soldier; the appointment was therefore conferred on a civilian; and the name of Douglas must be enrolled amongst those who have saved Jamaica from the destructive schemes of the French revolutionists. The mission of Roume had been solely directed against this colony, which he was instructed to destroy by every method which his ingenuity could invent, or his power execute. For this purpose he raised the *Légion Diabolique*, at Cape François, while Toussaint was employed against Rigaud in the neighbourhood of Aux Cayes; and it was suspected that the latter was so disgusted by the treacherous cruelty of the commissioner, that

he assisted Douglas in obtaining the information which enabled him to give timely notice of the approaching danger. Certain it is that so deeply did the British agent dive into the machinations of the enemy, so distinctly did he make himself acquainted with the plans, and so accurately describe the persons of the subordinate agents employed in Jamaica, that no difficulty was found in taking from a secret drawer all their papers, and securing their persons before they were aware of being watched, or even suspected. Duboison, who had been a captain in the British service, saved his life at the expense of his fidelity, and taught the salutary lesson, that the wicked can never love, and should rarely trust, their fellow-criminals. By a full disclosure of the plot, he brought the principal conspirator to the gallows, and the hopes of the revolutionists expired with their wretched agent. But, before he suffered, Las Portas, who was inspired with the warmest fervour of Jacobinism, acknowledged that he had been unsuccessful in all his attempts to corrupt the Maroons of Charles Town; and that, with little hope of better success in any other quarter, he endeavoured only to render himself important in the opinion of his employer by the false reports which he continually transmitted to him. The plot was throughout an impotent one; but the alarm which it caused, and the consequent distress of martial law, inflicted wounds upon Jamaica which its declining state rendered almost mortal. The

character of the colony received, at the same time, a stain which its usual habits of generosity rendered more apparent; and the little attention that was paid to the claims of Mr. Douglas proved the disgraceful fact, that public as well as private gratitude is called forth less by the remembrance of past favours than by the hope of future service. The commercial arrangement which he had been appointed to superintend was unpopular; in its political tendency it was certainly without example in ancient or modern history; and its continuance was considered as fraught with imminent danger to the existence of Jamaica. If it were adopted as a measure of economy, in order to save the British nation the expense of maintaining the posts it had occupied in Saint Domingo, it was an extraordinary policy which would prefer a war carried on in Jamaica to one maintained in an enemy's country. There could be no doubt but that the present tranquillity of Jamaica depended only on the civil discord which was raging between Toussaint, at the head of the negroes, and Rigaud, who commanded the people of colour; but should that contest cease, and the whole force of Saint Domingo be concentrated by the union of both, or the overthrow of one of the factions, it was highly probable that this commercial treaty would afford the means and opportunity for organising an expedition against Jamaica, not only with views of plunder, but to prevent fresh wars amongst themselves. The American States were also allowed a participation in this

extraordinary commerce, and had received exclusive privileges which centred all the benefits of the trade in them; while great loss was sustained by the merchants of Kingston and Montego Bay, and the slaves were daily corrupted by their inevitable intercourse with rebels of the worst description, who found employment on board the shipping. This commercial treaty was, in short, a further experiment on the part of the British cabinet at the expense of Jamaica; and it gave another, and the strongest claim to protection from those dangers which it invited *.

Why Jamaica should have been left for ten years without the protection of a resident Governor, each year pregnant with alarm and danger, is a question buried in the obscurity of the Colonial Office: but the same system seemed likely to be continued; for Lord Balcarres was succeeded by another Lieutenant, and Major-General Nugent was his successor. The colonists have recorded the virtues of the Earl with respect, his faults with candour; but the former, it must be allowed, were disgraced by a strict and even sordid parsimony, and the latter were so well concealed by the arts of propitiation, that the House of Assembly was induced more than once to petition the throne that "some mark of royal approbation and favour" might be bestowed upon him. He was undoubtedly a master of that political wisdom which is too often confounded with the practice of dissi-

* Journals of Assembly, vol. x. p. 410.

mulation and deceit; and when the Senate, after a warm debate, voted to him a present of a thousand guineas, it did him honour, and, perhaps, it did him justice.

During the latter years of the eighteenth century, no important alterations were made in any of the civil departments of the colony. A bill was brought into the Assembly to enable the Crown to appoint judges from amongst the elder barristers, but it was lost; and although the propriety of the chancellorship being held by a military governor was severely censured, upon the ground that any appeal to the King in Council, which an erroneous decision might render necessary, was attended by a prohibitory expense, no change was made, or even proposed. In the agricultural department, the only improvement was in the introduction of a new species of sugar-cane, which arrived in several ports of the island during the years 1794 and 1795, in vessels from St. Christopher and Antigua, where it had been introduced from the islands of Bourbon and the Mauritius, a native of countries still further to the East. It was soon found that, although it afforded less fuel, and a sugar specifically lighter, it possessed the decided advantage of yielding a third more in quantity than the species of cane hitherto cultivated in the colony; and that its juices were more easily separated from the mucilaginous impurities which destroy the grain, and injure the colour of the ordinary sugar.

The progress of opinion, and, perhaps, the per-

sonal interest of a party which soon afterwards assumed the decided character of Anti-Colonists, was in the meantime preparing the momentous measure of abolition; and to the Governors in the West Indies a mandate was addressed, desiring them to call upon the several legislative bodies "to adopt such measures as should appear best calculated to obviate the causes which impeded the natural increase of the negroes; gradually to diminish the necessity of the slave trade; and ultimately to lead to its complete termination:" while they were required to use the utmost vigilance in the proceedings, and representing the temper, which such a communication might be expected to call forth. This startling innovation upon immunities which the colonists considered that they held upon the security of the public faith, was soon followed by a more particular inquiry whether the Assembly of Jamaica would secure the negroes from being seized for the debts of their owners;—whether, in fact, they would be attached to the soil. To this inquiry Lord Balcarres replied, "that the House positively refused to give any answer." It had, indeed, already said all that, under such an apparent invasion of private property, it could be expected to say—"We can assure Your Majesty,"—it is the Assembly of Jamaica which speaks to the monarch of the British nation,—"that no opportunity, no circumstance, which may enable us to make further provisions to secure to every person in the island the certain, immediate, and active pro-

A.D. 1797.

tection of the law, in proportion to their improvement in morality and religion, shall be neglected; but we are actuated by motives of humanity only, and not with any view to the termination of the slave trade. The right of obtaining labourers from Africa is secured to Your Majesty's faithful subjects in the colony by several British acts of parliament, and by several proclamations of Your Majesty's royal ancestors. They, or their predecessors, have emigrated, and settled in Jamaica, under the most solemn promises of this assistance so absolutely necessary to them; and they can never relinquish this their essential right." The inhabitants of Jamaica were indeed anxious to remove the hardships, and alleviate, as far as possible, the distress which the prosecution of the slave trade must necessarily produce; and such was the object of the law restricting the age of the imported slaves: but perhaps it was going too far to say that they did not contemplate the termination of the trade*. They had, however, to combat against misfortune of every kind: each year brought with it an increased load of duties on their produce, and an additional burden of taxes on their property; while even the freight of their commodities to the only market allowed for them, was taxed by the extraordinary demand of fifty guineas

* The inhabitants of Jamaica possessed a powerful advocate in the person of a Royal Duke, who had visited her shores, and viewed her claims; and a service of plate was the poor, but honourable, testimony of their gratitude to the Duke of Clarence.

for the seaman's wages, who could scarcely be retained in the peaceful service of the merchant.

In the last year of the war the prize-courts of the American colonies were all placed under improved regulations: the judges were allowed a salary of two thousand pounds per annum, and a retiring pension after a certain period of service; while the number of courts was limited to those of *Jamaica*, Martinique, and *Halifax*. The horrors of a sanguinary and unsuccessful contest, which fell with peculiar severity upon this part of the British dominions, were at length suspended by a rash and perfidious peace: but it had little effect upon the Charaibean seat of war, where millions had been expended, and more than thirty thousand lives lost, except in the restitution to the allied powers of nearly all the possessions which had cost the British nation so much blood and treasure; and which were restored in much better condition than they were taken, for they had been vivified by the expenditure of British capital. The navy of France was, however, annihilated—her reluctant allies were exhausted, and any hope she might have entertained of receiving assistance from the North of Europe was destroyed by the thunder of Nelson, which echoed from Copenhagen through the Baltic. Napoleon, finding it impossible to regain his colonies by force of arms, resolved to attempt it by a treaty, and the new administration of the British nation, which could expect to hold its ground only by the effect of some

A.D. 1801.

popular measure, offered a fair prospect of obtaining a favourable result to the designs of the crafty Consul, whose smile was already the hope of fortune, and whose frown was the messenger of death, to abject France. The result was equal to his most sanguine expectations;—Great Britain restored to France much more than she ought; and was culpably negligent on two essential points: I. The securing to her own settlers the property which they had vested in the conquered colonies; II. The putting beyond dispute the right of cutting logwood and mahogany at Honduras.

During the war the merchants of Jamaica had been more fortunate than any other class of men in the West Indies: for they had enjoyed a privilege as extraordinary as it was lucrative; and their connexion with Spanish America ceased only with those hostilities which, while they continued, left Spain no friendly, or even neutral, colony to which she could resort, except Gaudaloupe. The Spaniards obtained from the policy of the British nation not only the privilege of frequenting its ports in the West Indies, but each vessel had also a safe-conduct from the English admiral, by a passport which at first cost only eighteen dollars; and, by means of which, they were respected, protected, and even escorted by his cruisers. The passport was renewed each voyage; its exhibition was all that was required; and the flag of Spain was instantly under the most powerful protection, while the national colours of France were

the prey of every hostile cruiser. Whatever might have occasioned this singular arrangement on the part of England, it is certain that the exclusive commerce of Spanish America was thus obtained; and that the merchants of Kingston, whose wharfs were crowded with the flags of Spain, possessed the advantage of exchanging the manufactures of Britain, with which their warehouses were loaded, for the cash and produce of a country which had no other mart of equal value or extent. Trinidad and Curaçoa were their only competitors; four hundred vessels cleared out in Spanish ports for some French colony, whither they never went; and on their return, they presented French papers, the authenticity of which was never investigated, or even questioned.

This partial advantage which Jamaica enjoyed, ceased with the war: the island relapsed to a state of commercial inactivity; all without bore the most threatening aspect, and all was feeble and hollow in its internal condition. A momentary spark of ardour and indignation was roused by a demand, which was made upon it for the maintenance of a military force, which the avidity of ministers would now have increased to five thousand men; and in the event of compliance, it was again promised that the black troops, and the 20th regiment of dragoons, should be withdrawn. The "immense debt contracted by the mother country, and the absolute necessity of her resorting to some extraordinary means to enable her

to support her increased naval and military establishments," were the reasons assigned for making this startling call upon the Jamaica planters*. The demand was indignantly rejected by the senate, which recapitulated all the grievances under which the colony so long had groaned; remonstrated against the ruinous duties which oppressed its agriculture, the prohibitions which annihilated commerce, and the ungenerous attempts which had been made upon the integrity of its constitution. The Lieut.-Governor then applied to have the control of the barrack department; but he was again firmly opposed; and the avidity of the British government was met by a determination on the part of the colonists that they would relinquish nothing which they yet possessed the power to retain. Lord Hobart, disconcerted by this defeat, expostulated; and even ventured to support his demand by the assertion that the oppressed and ruined colony, the first victim of the war, "had not yet contributed its full proportion to the general expenses of the empire." He lowered his claim, however, to three thousand men; and the inconsistency of his administration was never more apparent than in the reason which he gave for this abatement. He it was who had asserted that the ascendancy of the negroes in St. Domingo was an event so much to be dreaded by Jamaica, that the presence of a French fleet upon her shores, even before the treaty was concluded, was a hazardous measure to be preferred to

* Edwards's West Indies, vol. v. p. 30.

the danger she would otherwise be exposed to: yet he now assured the Assembly that the destruction of the French force, and the success of the negroes, contributed to the safety of Jamaica, and enabled him to diminish the burden he would impose. He then assumed the attitude of power, and threatened that, unless his demands were instantly complied with, he should continue to harass the island by the presence of the obnoxious regiment of blacks. The Assembly opposed reason to violence, produced incontestable evidence that the military expenditure of the island had been increased in a tenfold degree since the commencement of the American war, while the operation of accumulated duties oppressed its agriculture; and that a very heavy debt, for which a high rate of interest was paid, rendered it impossible to raise such additional taxes as would be necessary to support the proposed establishment. The subject was dismissed, and the colony maintained its ground upon the constitutional principle, that its right to protection was at least as great as that of any other portion of the British empire. But this enthusiasm in the cause of justice, whatever lustre it might shed on the declining age of Jamaica, served rather to irritate than to subdue the encroaching spirit of the British cabinet.

I touch, with fear and trembling, the subject of the Dissenting Missionaries, who during the latter years of the last century thought themselves called upon to sow the seeds of their dissenting principles between Jamaica, and her parent, by commencing their doubt-

ful labours here*. The inhabitants of Jamaica were descended from a race which knew the value of that constitutional religion which had been sanctified by the blood of their ancestors long before the poison of sectarianism had shed its deadly influence upon the purity of the church; while, therefore, they spared no expense to supply instruction to their people under the established ministry, they resolutely opposed that canting hypocrisy which tended to degrade their slaves by a vice with which they were still happily unacquainted; and the Legislature passed an Act forbidding all persons, not qualified by the laws of England and Jamaica, to preach, or instruct the negroes. A contest was then commenced between the Sectarians and the authorities of Jamaica, which proves that the object of the former was not toleration but supremacy; and the several stages by which they have been permitted to climb to their present ascendancy will be marked in the following pages. Other subjects of more pressing interest soon engrossed the attention of Jamaica. A.D. 1802.

In the contest respecting the supplies, the Assembly was victorious; but the refractory spirit of the colonists was punished by an additional duty upon sugar of four shillings per cwt.: while the customs were raised twelve and a half per cent.; a measure which operated, of course, as a further tax upon

* Read, if you can, the obscure language, but evident meaning of Dr. Coke—his West Indies—passim. And see a specimen Note XLIII.

every article of West Indian produce. The planters petitioned and complained; their language breathed the spirit of discontent brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty, but it was all in vain; and the remonstrance against the abolition of the slave trade was again fatal to a faithful report which was really deserving of the most deliberate attention. As if to add insult to injury, an attempt was once more made to subvert the privileges of the colonial Assembly, by disallowing the act restricting the dissenting missionaries, and by offering another which had been framed by the Board of Trade. The indignation of the House was expressed in a resolution, that "any attempt to influence its proceedings in matters of internal regulation was an interference with its appropriate functions which it could never submit to."

A.D. 1803.

Between two haughty and jealous neighbours, the motives of quarrel will seldom be wanting; and the peace had scarcely been ratified upon paper, when, as might have been expected, it was broken by the characteristic perfidy of the French republic. A spirited assault immediately restored to England the ceded colonies of Saint Lucia, Tobago, Demerara, and Essequibo; acquisitions which again produced a favourable change in the commercial interests of Jamaica. But the city of Kingston was near falling a prey to the machinations of some black conspirators, owing rather to the carelessness of the new police, than to the artifice of the plot. The savage

multitude, incapable of concerting or executing any scheme, was agitated by various, and often hostile intentions; and their plans were discovered in time to spare the effusion of blood, save that of the ringleaders, who were executed with a degree of solemnity which it was hoped might strike terror into the minds of their concealed adherents. The failure of the expedition, which was sent from Jamaica against the island of Curaçoa, contributed also to cast a deeper shade over the fortunes of the colony; and the suspension of the intercourse with the American States, by which means alone the island had been furnished with the most essential supplies, was a wound in the most vital point. Such, indeed, was the unhappy condition of the inhabitants, that, whatever might be their conduct, their fate was commonly the same; and periods of the greatest distress were often taken advantage of to increase their burdens or diminish their resources. Nor was General Nugent free from censure for his relentless obduracy in enforcing the harsh instruction, while it was left to his discretionary judgment to dispense with the restriction "in cases of real necessity." A similar interruption of intercourse with those states which yielded such copious stores of provisions, had once before caused the death of more than fifteen thousand negroes*; and the same effects seemed likely to follow the present system,

* This happened during the interdiction of foreign supplies, in the years 1780—1787.

until the Lieutenant-Governor tardily discovered the precipice on which he stood, and ungraciously complied with the reiterated remonstrances of the Senate, whose report of the state of the island contained this dismal picture—"Sheriff's officers and tax-gatherers are every where offering for sale the property of individuals who have seen better days; all kind of credit is at an end; and a faithful detail of our distress would have the appearance of a frightful caricature."

A.D. 1804.

The war seemed to have been suspended only to commence again with redoubled fury amongst the devoted colonies of the West; yet it would be impossible to judge of its character without a perfect knowledge of its events; and even if it were practicable to weave such a detail into a work like this, the sameness or repetition of the action would weary the most patient reader. The bravest admirals of Europe displayed their flags amidst the islands of the Charaibean sea. Rear-Admiral Duckworth commanded on the Jamaica station, protected its trade, and vivified its ports, by the capture of a multitude of prizes. Surinam surrendered to the arms of Commodore Hood; the extraordinary caves and pinnacles of the Diamond rock*, fortified by the same intrepid seaman, gave the utmost uneasiness to the enemy in Martinique: while the independence of Hayti was proclaimed, the French expelled, and Dessalines, its first Emperor, or tyrant, ascended

* See Note XLIV.

the throne amidst the acclamations of a barbarous multitude. An extensive commerce stimulated the French, however, to great exertions: Guadaloupe was their principal rendezvous and support; and there they equipped numerous vessels of the finest description, but destined only to fall a prey to the boats of the English squadrons which hovered over them. The general conduct of the French government on the continent of Europe was marked by the utmost violence and outrage—by the wanton infringement of the rights of neutral nations—of the acknowledged privileges of accredited ministers, and of the established principles of the law of nations; and the devoted King of Spain again accepted that forced alliance which hurled him from his throne.

## Chapter XVII.

Further encroachments on the Resources of Jamaica.—Their cause and effect.—Sir Eyre Coote's administration.—Useless remonstrances against the Abolition Law.—Arrival of the Duke of Manchester, who announces relief to the Colony.—General Carmichael's dispute with the Assembly.—Conspiracy among the Slaves.—Increasing influence of the Sectarians.—Disallowance of the Slave Law—and Dissolution of the Assembly.—Explanation of the Crown.—General Morrison's Government.—Agricultural distesss.—Peace in Europe.—Reform of Law Courts and Public Offices.—Fire at Port Royal.—Hurricane.—Impeachment of the Chief Justice.—Suppression of the Sectarians.—Insurrection in Barbadoes.—Its effect upon Jamaica arrested by the prudence of the Duke of Manchester.—Slave Registry Bill.—Church of Scotland.—Improved condition of the Slaves.

[A.D. 1805—1816.]

The repeated encroachments of the British cabinet on the property and liberties of Jamaica have been related with a fatiguing minuteness, not only as the events themselves are important in the history of the island, but as they have contributed, more than any other cause, to the decline of its prosperity, by the perennial increase of the taxes, and the perpetual additions made to its military establishment. It will be remembered that the control of the barrack department had once been claimed by Lord Balcarres; it was again demanded by General Nugent, and still resolutely refused on the plea that

the funds granted by the public should be placed only in hands from whence an account of their appropriation could be demanded and compelled.

Though we may suspect, it is not in our power to relate, the political and secret transactions of the Cabinet which suggested measures of such an arbitrary and oppressive nature. It would be as difficult to do so as to describe all those trifling causes, those private views, and paltry prejudices, which often influence the fate of mighty kingdoms; and they must have ever remained concealed in the impenetrable darkness of the palace, had not the debates in Parliament thrown a ray of light on the subject, and shown that the colonies have been sacrificed to the clamour of popular opinion, or the inveteracy of prejudice. That irresistible current was turned, by a few self-interested or misguided men, into a narrow channel, and directed, with all its weight, against the unrepresented possessors of colonial property; while the fruitless opposition which was offered by them to the abolition of the slave-trade bore down those claims which really demanded the most deliberate consideration. The barrier of public faith, which ought to have protected the property of the citizens of the empire, however distant, was thus overwhelmed by an impetuous stream of characteristic, and, perhaps, honourable feeling; for the interests of slave-holders were not considered, and pity, for once, was silenced in the breasts of the British nation. The undistin-

A D. 1806.

guishing and ravenous appetite of a credulous people swallowed every bait which some unprincipled advocates of humanity held out, to depreciate the properties and destroy the reputation of the distant planters, who were oppressed as subjects, and despised as strangers, and almost aliens. Yet, had only a few of their extraordinary charges been proved, it would have become the duty of government, not to complain, but decidedly to punish. Such fabulous machinery has been the constant and miserable resource of the enemies of Jamaica; but in this case the evidence which was adduced plainly contradicted the facts which were alleged; and the sacrifice of national faith could be justified only by the dictates of humanity, which, even at such a cost, might be permitted honourably to purchase the abolition of a cruel and disgraceful trade, that could not but poison the source of national manners, obliterate the sense of virtue and religion, and almost extinguish the instincts of nature. Jamaica was peculiarly under censure for the busy perseverance with which she continued to pour in her complaints against a measure which certainly threatened her with ruin. To degrade or annoy her, perhaps, she was still deprived of the advantages, or, at least, the honour, of a governor, and kept under the command of a lieutenant, while the momentous question was decided which involved her most vital interests, and inflicted a wound which, it was hoped, or feared, she could not long survive.

The law of Abolition was at length ratified by the British Parliament, and an address to the throne proved that the fate of the colonists received some consideration; for the object of it was to prevent, if possible, an unfair competition, by requiring the co-operation of foreign powers. The courts of Europe were too little interested in the domestic factions of Great Britain, and too much in the prosecution of a lucrative trade, to listen to the mere suggestions of a people whose commercial prosperity afforded some suspicions of an interested motive. The frozen regions of the north were, however, the first susceptible of the warm feelings of humanity; and the king of Denmark set the example of relinquishing the slave trade to the continental powers of the south. At a respectful distance, with slow and sullen step, France advanced, or seemed to follow, when the treaty which restored him to his throne extorted, from the reluctance of the Most Christian Monarch, a promise that the slave trade should be abolished within his dominions before the expiration of five years. It was in vain that the Prince Regent of England directed his ambassador at Paris to offer either a sum of money, or the cession of an island in the West Indies, as the price of the desired object. The utmost concession which could be obtained was an injunction to the Minister of Marine, restricting the trade to the south of Cape Formosa, a point situated in the fourth degree of north latitude. Nor was it till the imbecile and ungrateful

Louis had again experienced a reverse of fortune, that he could be persuaded to abandon a traffic which ill accorded with his peculiar title, and had so long been a reproach to the most polished courts of Europe. The king of the Netherlands, with sincerity and effect, followed the example of England. Sweden did the same. The imperial phantom of Spain adopted the early delays and evasions of the court of France; while in Portugal the slave trade was continued under the sanction of the laws, and authorized by convention.

General Nugent was recalled from Jamaica, and Sir Eyre Coote commenced his lieutenancy by the popular measure of proclaiming the ports once more open to the copious stores of provisions which flowed from the United States. His first session was prefaced by a speech, delivered with force and spirit, and which promised his utmost vigilance to guard the interests of the island against the attack of foreign or domestic foes. He inspected the militia with the eye of an experienced general; and, following the diligent, though doubtful, example of his military predecessors, he changed its constitution, and altered all its movements, by the promulgation of a new code of rules and regulations. The presence of three general officers, Drummond, Balfour, and Montresor, discovered the fears of the imperial council, and evinced its serious anxiety to guard against any commotion which the important edict of abolition was calculated to produce amongst the

expectant slaves. The probable advantage which the enemies of England might also take of such a period to invade the island, required that every means of defence should be prepared for instant exertion; and the condition of the fortresses became an object of increasing anxiety and expense.

With nothing further to hope for from the inflexible humanity of the British nation, the Assembly still renewed its complaints, with much spirit, and some truth, against a law that deprived the country of a considerable revenue which it was difficult to replace, and put an immediate stop to the progress of agriculture in an island, one-half of which was still an uncultivated though luxuriant waste. The long continuance of sufferings extorted a naked representation of the truth; and truth has ever been an unpardonable libel by the real advocates of the slaves in every stage, from abolition to emancipation. The House, in its anxiety to do justice to its constituents, forgot that where no resistance can be made, no moral or physical courage can be exerted; and, instead of consulting the dictates of reason, or, at least of prudence, it indulged the feelings of an impotent irritation when they were not only useless, but highly detrimental to the interest of the colony. Such continued perseverance on the part of Jamaica was, under such circumstances, ill-judged; for the dreaded measure could then be delayed by the opposition only of the royal prerogative to the voice of

the nation. Yet the probable loss of a province which employed more than a thousand ships, maintained sixteen thousand seamen, and contributed three millions to the annual revenue of the empire, was a startling apprehension; and the decrease of the militia, a chief means of defence, by depriving the industrious of the means, and the most sanguine of the hopes of improving their fortunes, afforded a most gloomy prospect, at a time when a trial of strength might be required to retain possession of the little that was left. The planters, with that propensity which the injured have to view everything in the most unfavourable light, considered the offensive law as an act of confiscation, without a proof of guilt; and their claim to compensation, although totally incompatible with the resources of the empire, was loudly, and, perhaps, justly urged. But the sympathy of the nation ran impetuously in another direction *. The tremendous events of the war engrossed the attention of the world;—the continued existence of Jamaica was scarcely noticed, and only traced in the silent stream of gold which flowed, from a drained and distant source, into the coffers of the British treasury; while the people of England were persuaded to adopt the convenient maxim that the rights and properties of the colonists,

* The tumultuous tide of public opinion, which so often shakes our native land, almost justifies the image of the sublime Bossuet: "Cette île, plus orageuse que les mers qui l'environnent."

however innocent, might be sacrificed to the credit of a splendid act of national and tardy justice.

The contest between England and almost all the powers of Europe, held on its wonted course amidst the devoted islands of the Western sea, whose possession was still considered worth contending for; and the fleets of the Old World seemed to be there collected to fight for the dominion of the New. The fearful name of Nelson protected, however, all the British isles. He had taken the command in the Mediterranean, and in his last ship, the Victory; but notwithstanding all his vigilance, the French fleet escaped from Toulon, and was joined by that of Cadiz. Their destination was the British colonies; and Jamaica was the principal object of their exertions: but they were so closely pursued by the naval hero of Great Britain, that they soon felt the terror of his approach, and lost the power of action, while they skulked amongst the islands, rather like fearful pirates than a powerful, and even a superior force. Having at length obtained some information of the course which they had taken, Nelson, with eager delight, sought to render the mouths of the Oronoco as famous as those of the Nile; or to achieve a victory on the spot rendered eternally memorable by the defeat of the proud De Grasse. But he was deceived by the treachery or the ignorance of an American, and he vainly searched the seas from the shores of Martinique to the coast of Guayanas. The

A.D. 1807.

panic-struck armament of France and Spain had again fled from his tremendous presence to the shores of Europe. The adventurous valour of Nelson was inspired, and has, perhaps, been adorned by the enthusiasm of his age and country; but the fortune of England flew before his flag, and he closed a career of unexampled glory by saving the British world in the memorable battle of Trafalgar. A force of ten sail of the line, and as many frigates, was the wreck of the combined navy left in the Western sea; and it eluded pursuit amongst the islands, until Admiral Duckworth discovered and destroyed half of it on the coast of Saint Domingo, when the British flag once more swept the ocean of all its enemies. The danger and escape of Jamaica might have taught the nation the value of the colony, by the importance which foreign powers attached to its possession; but the line of conduct since adopted towards the sinking isle, has proved that its most successful enemies are in the bosom of the empire.

The fickle goddess fought with England, indeed, on the ocean, but she joined her enemies on land. Yet even the disasters which were experienced on the continent of Europe, left the resources of the nation unimpaired; for the colonies alone were taxed to meet nearly the increase of demand, and it seemed as if sugar could withstand the pressure of the heaviest burdens. Jamaica, in the mean time, had suffered the miseries of protracted drought; and

the extension of the term of intercourse with the United States was the only measure which could save her from the slow pangs of famine. A spirit of emulation and loyalty still pervaded the inhabitants, and the lieutenant-governor introduced a system of regularity, economy, and military arrangement in the defence of the island, which satisfied the people that the domestic taxes, at least, although wrung from their weary labours, were really employed in their protection. Their representatives in the Assembly were men of ability and worth; and, perhaps, at no period could it boast of bolder patriots than such as did honour to its benches: yet all that could be effected by wise councils, united exertions, and the sacrifice of individual interest, could scarcely preserve the island against the powers of a tempest which shook the thrones of Europe.

Amongst the civil arrangements which the wisdom of the senate introduced, the establishment of St. Ann's Bay as a free port, and conferring on Falmouth, Port Morant, and Port Maria, and soon afterwards, on Annatto Bay, the advantages of ports of entrance and clearance, were measures affording considerable relief to a large portion of the community. Yet they were overlooked in the distress which prevented, or the difficulty which delayed, the collection of such a tax as should meet the loss of those revenues which the importation from Africa had uniformly produced since the birth of the colony; while the decay of agriculture was hastened, not only

by the accumulating duties, but by an extraordinary preference which was given to the enemies of the nation by means of neutral flags, and the still more dubious policy of licenses. Sixty-five sugar estates had been abandoned since the year 1799: within five years thirty-two had been sold out of chancery, where more than a hundred still remained in hopeless pawn for their respective debts. The fortunes of a few might indeed survive the general wreck, and receive even an augmentation from the misfortunes of those around them; but the ruin of much the most useful and the largest portion of the community seemed inevitable; while the consternation, which could not be augmented, was diverted by the discovery of a dangerous conspiracy in the parish of St. George. The seizure of the ringleader, a slave on Balcarres plantation, damped the ardour of the conspirators; and the evidence of those who were afterwards captured exposed a plot which would have organised the Coromantee negroes throughout the district, under the command of six barbarous leaders, appointed "to drive the English into the sea, and give the island to the French," who were already in considerable force within the country, and in correspondence with the disaffected from without. The chief conspirator who basely ventured, had justly forfeited his life; and although some were acquitted by the tribunals which tried them, the alarming circumstances of the case, which the vigilance of the governor had thoroughly unravelled, authorised him in

banishing them from the island; an act of personal responsibility which the Assembly soon afterwards fully approved and confirmed.

The happy combination of spirit and prudence with which Sir Eyre Coote crushed this dangerous revolt, and the zeal which he displayed in every department of his government, rendered his career more popular and harmonious than that of any one who, under circumstances of equal difficulty, had administered the affairs of the colony. A full Governor was, however, at length appointed, and he resigned the administration, embarrassed with debts and danger, into the hands of a nobleman, whose exalted rank and character promised both candour to investigate, and influence to redress many of its wrongs. Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect nature, once more visited the shores of Jamaica in the person of the Duke of Manchester, whose name I cannot write, nor the colony read, without the warmest recollections of gratitude and esteem. It is, under any circumstances, a less invidious task to record the vices of former governors, than to celebrate the virtues of existing ones: yet at the moment I write, his government has ceased; and after a residence of nearly twenty years, he has retired to a life of ease and honour, in his native land. His influence can, therefore, excite no praise, his power can control the record of no fact; and the historian, disdaining the language of flattery, relates, with the simplicity of truth, the memorable events of his long administration.

From the commencement of the revolutionary war in America, a war which deprived Great Britain of her most valuable colonies, there had elapsed thirty-six years of some glory, but more misfortune; during which, the inevitable consequences of the contest, and the fiscal oppression of a trembling government, had nearly ruined those whose loyalty or whose weakness had rendered them submissive to the most unjust decrees which ever emanated from the British throne. Amongst these, the island of Jamaica still held a foremost rank by its local station, and the influence of those resources which seemed, to such as beheld not its internal distress, to be inexhaustible. It became necessary, however, to relieve its agriculture from some of the burdens with which it was oppressed; but it required a man of no ordinary influence and talent to guide the councils of an irritated people, and to preserve to Great Britain those revenues which the events of the war each day rendered her less able to dispense with. It thus became the grateful duty of the Duke of Manchester to announce an edict of the Imperial Parliament which removed one amongst the many evils which the general maxims of administration had brought upon the island; and the annalist feels some pleasure in discovering a single action which affects Jamaica, and may yet be ascribed to liberality. The laws which confined the distillation of spirit to the produce of her cane-fields, and reduced the duties on the fruits of labour in her coffee-plantations, promised to revive

the expiring planters; while the concession of that point in the abolition law which would have apprenticed within the colony such natives of Africa as might be condemned as prize, or forfeited, held out the cheering prospect that, under the auspices of its new governor, Jamaica would at last receive some share of attention, and perhaps of justice. But the justice of kings is understood by themselves, and even by their subjects, with an ample indulgence for the gratification of every interest; and the salutary decree had hardly begun to operate, when it was finally annulled. In the decline of the colony, when every principle of health had been exhausted, the tardy application of so partial a remedy could hardly, indeed, have produced the important and salutary effects which the sanguine colonists expected; but the disappointment of the planters was extreme and fatal.

The effect which the abolition of the slave trade might have upon those who were already in the chains of servitude was still problematical, or justly dreaded; and it was the act of a prudent administration to prepare for the event by the presence of a Governor whose influence would awe, or whose condescension might appease, the rising tumult. The day on which the edict came into force at length arrived; and it fell upon Jamaica with less weight than had been apprehended: for the wisdom of the Assembly had adopted precautionary measures against the most threatening evils. But the exclusive right of that body to legislate internally for the island re-

ceived a serious blow, which left no hope to the unfortunate holders of the servile race, but that the designs of those who had effected the abolition of the trade could be completed alone by the annihilation of the property in slaves. The arrest of the trade in Jamaica might indeed be compared to that of the circulation in one of the arteries of the human frame; for a stop was at once put to a source of life which was co-existent with the colony,—to that channel which conducted to its heart the golden tide of life; and it became necessary, without loss of time, to open another source which might diffuse an equal stream throughout the exhausted frame.

A circumstance soon after occurred which offered an happy presage of what might be expected from the administration of a Governor who could proceed through a torrent of popular invective with that firm step, and steady temper, which gives every thing to justice, nothing to clamour or resentment. The cautious prudence with which the Duke explored his way in the darkest, the most gloomy period of colonial existence, was variously considered at the time, and not justly appreciated by those who were yet unacquainted with his character, or who saw not, in his anxiety to maintain the prerogative of the Crown, a political motive to uphold his own, and thus to secure such an influence in the British cabinet as would serve the true interests of Jamaica far better than a blind acquiescence in the claims of a people who were soured by discontent,

and therefore ill-qualified to form a just estimate of their actual situation. A negro corps was still quartered upon the island, and many years elapsed before that painful thorn could be extirpated from the bosom of the country. About the period of the Duke's arrival, one of those events, which the presence of these armed barbarians seemed likely to produce, actually occurred, and a mutiny broke out in the second West India regiment quartered at Fort Augusta. A party of recruits, lately purchased, excited, it was supposed, by some of the older soldiers, rushed from the ground on which they were at drill, proceeded to the front of the regiment, then, parading at some distance on the beach, and having passed the flank company, was proceeding, with the confidence of presumed success to the centre, when it was met by the adjutant and the major, both of whom fell beneath the blows, or bayonets, of the insurgents. Some of the mutineers formed, for an instant, in the rear of the grenadier company; but the men stood to their arms with spirit, and decision: fifteen of the mutineers were killed on the spot; and the revolt was instantly subdued. What the ball or bayonet spared, a military execution soon disposed of: but unfortunately the alarming incidents of the day so completely engrossed the attention of all parties, that the civil duty of sending for a Coroner entirely escaped the recollection of the garrison. No investigation, by the authorities of the island, took place; and the alarm of the inha-

bitants, excited by an event which had been long apprehended, was rather increased than allayed by the vague accounts of the transaction which General Carmichael thought proper to publish in his regimental orders. Meetings were consequently held in many parishes for the purpose of addressing the Governor; and the people were prevented from carrying their complaints to the foot of the throne by the consideration only that their object would be better accomplished through their representatives, when supported by such evidence as it was expected they could exact before the highest tribunal of the country. A full and impartial inquiry was therefore demanded from the powers of the Assembly; but the General refused to produce the evidence which had been taken before the military tribunals, and went so far as to issue an order restricting all beneath his command from answering such questions as might implicate the judgment of his own courts. A high sense of military duty induced him to consider such an interference of the local legislature as a flagrant infringement on the government and discipline of the army; and when he was summoned to the bar of the Assembly, to answer for an undoubted breach of its privileges, he refused obedience, and hastened to inform the Governor that "he felt it his duty to wait the orders of the Commander-in-chief before he could submit to any jurisdiction or control the House might attempt to assume over His Majesty's forces." The General,

thus expressing his firm determination, left no room for the advice or persuasion of the Duke of Manchester, who considered a question which involved the immunities of the people with the discipline of the army—the privileges of the crown, with those of the power which supported it—as one which required the most mature consideration, and on which a veteran officer might be expected to have much better information than himself. A point, therefore, which it was not for him to decide, he considered it best to waive the discussion of, until positive instructions could be received from England; and when the Senate proceeded to the ultimate measure of ordering the commander of the forces into the immediate custody of its sergeant, the Duke, who beheld in such an act the degradation of a general officer in the face of his army, had no alternative but in cutting short the session, and postponing the momentous question until the King's pleasure should be known.

The point was repeatedly argued, and decided by the suffrage of a single voice, in the royal council*, and the anxiety of the Governor of Jamaica to remove all cause of dissension induced him to lay before the Assembly A.D. 1809.

* The momentous question was warmly agitated, and appeared to have been finally disposed of, by the third meeting of the royal council in favor of General Carmichael; but in a fourth sitting, the Lord Chancellor unexpectedly appeared, and his opinion was conclusive in favour of the Colonial Assembly.

the important decision only five short months after the agitation of the question. He announced, with becoming confidence in the rectitude of his conduct, that His Majesty saw no objection to the production of the documents required, and had therefore directed the attendance of all witnesses free from the restrictions of General Carmichael. The General appeared at the bar of the Assembly; his apology was honourable to all parties, and it was received: an investigation of the mutiny took place, though without any important result, and the Duke of Manchester was firmly established in the affections of his people, by the judicious conduct, which proved that he exercised the faculties of a vigorous and discerning mind.

But the most implacable enemies of Jamaica were in the bosom of the country; and the interior peace of the island was again disturbed by the influx of foreigners, and the disorders which the French emigrants from St. Domingo produced in Kingston, where the police was unequal to cope with their intrigues, or even to subdue their strength. A cloud of brigand negroes and people of colour had clandestinely been introduced from St. Domingo under the feigned name of Curaçoa men, and they maintained an uninterrupted correspondence with the disaffected of all descriptions throughout the island. Information, extorted from the terror of a condemned deserter belonging to the West India regiment, who dexterously assumed the merit of an early and volun-

tary confession, exposed a plot, which extended in endless ramifications, for the purpose of destroying the whites, revolutionising the island, and setting the slaves at liberty, as had already been done in the neighbouring colony. The day fixed upon was the anniversary of St. Patrick; but some disappointment having arisen, the attempt was postponed till the end of March. The subject was strictly examined, and the depositions of the deserter proved true. Many of the conspirators were apprehended, more absconded, and the trembling criminal obtained his pardon from the gratitude of the rescued country. The honours of duke, commander-in-chief, and captain-general, had been usurped by the most bold and bloody; but the project of a negro republic ended, for the time, with the lives of the titled miscreants. From such conspiracies, however, the island could never expect to be free while any intercourse was permitted with a neighbouring colony, whose example was so fatally pernicious to the peace of all around it. A petition was, therefore, laid at the foot of the throne, praying to be relieved from the presence of such foreigners as infested the island; as also from the guardianship of black barbarians who, with arms in their hands, had been repeatedly detected in rebellious conspiracies with the slaves.

It would be difficult to find a stronger proof of the injustice which swayed the British cabinet in its conduct towards Jamaica, than that which was exemplified in the military order which deducted from the

pay of the European troops a sum almost equivalent to the additional subsistence which was granted, on so liberal a scale, by the island. But the powerful interest of a domestic faction, which avowed itself not only the decided enemy of the colonial system in the West, but the opponent of the established church and constitution, intercepted all relief, and refused even common justice to a people who were so firmly attached to the religion of their ancestors as to reject the interference of sectarians, and exclude from the presence of their slaves the artful ministers of pious frenzy, whose unseasonable meetings had organised rebellion under the shadow of religion. The want of employment in the fields or manufactures of England, sent crowds of ignorant and itinerant preachers to these shores, where they found, or expected to find, a rich harvest, or a glorious martyrdom in a cause which, though not prepared to die in, they knew would raise them into repute at home. The pulpit, that safe and sacred organ of sedition, resounded with the ambiguous tenets, or at least the words, of freedom and equality; and the public discontent might be inflamed by the promise of a glorious deliverance from a bondage which the slave would rather apply to his temporal, than to his spiritual condition. The church of England opened wide her doors; but the pagan Africans, who, under the tuition of these people, had submitted, though with some reluctance, to believe that their unbelieving fathers were in hell, were astonished and exasperated to

find that they themselves were going thither, *if* their enlightened masters went to heaven. They were led to believe that one religion was for the owners, another for the labourers of the soil, but that one only was the true faith ; and their passions were inflamed by the prospect that they should soon change places with their masters in another world. This confused doctrine not only checked and retarded the operation of Christianity, but infused a deadly poison in the cup of salvation. Yet it was the work of real though ignorant friends of humanity and religion : and whenever the spirit of fanaticism, at once so credulous and so crafty, has insinuated itself into a noble mind, it insensibly corrodes the vital principles of virtue and veracity ; while, in the prosecution of a favourite scheme, the best of men, satisfied with the purity of their intentions, are subject to forget the bounds of moderation. The dæmon of Socrates affords a memorable example of the fact that from enthusiasm to imposture the step is slippery and perilous. If, therefore, a Wilberforce, or a Romilly, were to be found in the ranks of their most cruel enemies, the inhabitants of Jamaica could perceive only the utter hopelessness of their condition, or the necessity for a firm opposition to the invasion of their rights. Their enemies were formidable, and their dexterity was the more to be apprehended because it was dark and distant, and founded on apparent humanity : in the support of truth the arts of fraud and fiction may be deemed less criminal ; and

they would have started at the foulness of the means had they been less satisfied of the importance and justice of the end.

Upon the plea that they were denied the benefits of that religious toleration which was framed for a Christian land, and which, it was falsely argued, should give to pagan slaves a free access to the pernicious doctrines of every sect, a committee of Methodists obtained from the Royal Council the disallowance of a colonial law, which interdicted the slaves from attending their nocturnal meetings—conferring, at the same time, however, the most essential benefits on their temporal as well as spiritual condition; and the cause of sedition was thus sanctified by the dispensing powers of fanaticism. In a petition addressed to the civic authorities of Kingston, the Methodist ministers had confessed that their predecessors "upon many occasions had conducted themselves improperly, and inculcated improper notions into the minds of the slaves*:" yet they claimed, with admirable effrontery, the fullest credit for an assertion, that they would in future conform to the colonial constitution; and from the unsuspecting or hostile council of Saint James, they thus obtained the rejection of a most salutary and important law. The privileges of the colony were also infringed, by imposing an unconstitutional restraint upon their right to legislate internally for themselves; for an instruction

* See Journals of Assembly, vol. xii. p. 172.

was issued to the Governor, expressing the royal pleasure, that his assent should never be given to any law which might, in the remotest degree, affect religion, before he had transmitted it for the approval of the crown, or secured its suspension until his Majesty's pleasure should be known.—And it added not a little to the festering tendency of the wound, thus inflicted on the colonial senate, to receive it through the common channel of the public prints. It was a vital blow which the Assembly has never recovered; for though a firm resolution to withhold the payment of the troops, forced from the reluctant minister an avowal of its right to send up an act without a suspending clause, the effective restraint is still left in the hands of the Governor, whose instruction has never received any modification. Before the equivocal avowal could, however, reach the island, the resolute determination of the house had compelled the Duke to adopt the unpopular expedient of a dissolution.

From the work of a credulous or crafty enthusiast, I cannot determine what I ought to transcribe, till I am satisfied how much I ought to believe; nor is it a pleasing task to winnow out the few grains of truth which are contained in a mass of absurdity, and fiction. But it appears from the evidence of a contemporary historian *, that the citizens of Kingston, and the inhabitants of Morant Bay, had earned

* Captain Southey's ink seems scarcely blacker than Dr. Coke's; or Mr. Stephen's. (*Chron. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 242—299, &c.)

the sincere and peculiar hatred of the Methodist missionaries, as early as the year 1803, by refusing to license some suspicious applicants; and afterwards by interrupting the unseasonable meetings of the negroes, at a period when the country was agitated by the machinations of foreign and domestic foes. The repeated conspiracies which had been so artfully framed, and the increasing caution and corruption of the slaves, proved that some new engine was at work; and the confession of the dissenters themselves warranted the promulgation of an ordinance in the city of Kingston, forbidding "the profanation of religious rites, and the false worship of God, under pretence of preaching, by illiterate and ill-disposed persons."

It might be curious, though, probably, a fruitless inquiry, how far the privileges of British toleration could be justly claimed by pagan* worshippers: whether, in fact, under its sanction, they might not plead for the practice of their own barbarous superstitions, as well as for the exercise of those sectarian principles, by which their consciences could neither be influenced nor offended—why, in short, the neophytes should be instantly assailed by a dangerous latitude of faith, when every denomination of Christianity is equally strange to them, and one esteemed much better than the rest. The ladder of Acesius† has been freely borrowed by most of the

* Note XLV.

† When the Emperor Constantine resolved to tolerate the Novatians, a sect which he had previously proscribed, he gently

Christian sects; but that of the established church is at least as easy to ascend as the rest; and why the attention of the pagan, whom we seek simply to convert, should be distracted by the offer of any other, is a question to which it may be found difficult to return a satisfactory answer. We are informed, and we may believe, that the police of a country which had suffered so much from the dangerous principles of dissension, *did* receive orders "to take every Methodist to the cage, that should be discovered preaching (one or more) either by day or night *;" but it is difficult to ascertain whether my author be in jest, or earnest, when he states that one of the Methodist missionaries "was found guilty both of singing and praying;—that singing was declared to mean preaching;" and that, merely for this offence, he was committed to the workhouse, and sentenced to hard labour for one month †.

It is scarcely possible to observe a more decisive symptom of weakness in the constitution of any government, than to be as indulgent in the execution of the laws as severe in enacting them; and it is

reproved its narrow tenets, by saying to its bishop, "Acesius, take a ladder, and get up to heaven by yourself."

* This unintelligible sentence is again from the pen of Captain Southey. (*Chron. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 392.)

† Ibid. p. 242. The author must have studied the arts and principles of the missionary Doctor with pious curiosity and diligence. The severity of the twelve tables punished with death all nocturnal meetings in the city of Rome, whatever might be the pretence, of pleasure, or religion, or the public good.

peculiarly incumbent on the authors of religious restraint, previously to reflect whether they are prepared to support it in the last extremes. That such determination has never marked the edicts of Jamaica is lamentably proved, by the existing divisions which have been introduced by the sectarians between the master and the slave; and by the prevalence of those heterodox missionaries, who now seek, not toleration, but supremacy.

The wisdom and authority of the legislator are seldom indeed victorious in a contest with the vigilant dexterity of private interest or religious intrigue; and the slumber of orthodoxy, into which the Church of England has relapsed, has been taken ample advantage of by its wary foes, who can boast that many have embraced their cause, not with the cold assent of the understanding alone, but with the warmth of affection, perhaps with the eagerness of fashion; while the good-natured langour of the established clergy seems incapable of cultivating the spiritual vineyard which they are so desirous to possess.

Irritated by the invasion of their chartered rights, the senators of Jamaica embraced the first moment of their meeting to pass another law, imposing a salutary restraint upon the Methodists and Baptists. The governor gave his consent, and the wound was superficially closed. But this measure had little effect in healing the original disease; for history and experience assure us, that though the disorders of the body may sometimes be cured by salutary

violence, neither steel nor fire can eradicate the errors of the mind. Religious obstinacy, even amongst the idolatrous Africans, is hardened and exasperated by persecution; and as soon as the oppression subsides, those who have yielded are restored to favour, and such as have resisted are honoured as saints or martyrs. The mischief which the sectarians have done in this colony lies at the door of the misguided enthusiasts in Great Britain. In spite of all colonial laws, a cloud of itinerant preachers hastened to exchange a parish pittance in England, for a lucrative profession in the West Indies; and it soon overshadowed Jamaica, where the soil was too fertile to allow the vegetating seed to lie long in the ground without producing the fruits of disorder and rebellion. If some few men amongst the colonists, who are possessed of abilities to discern, and influence to correct, the dangerous intrusion, and, above all, have a property to defend; if they have lent their assistance to destroy the country through such means as these, we can look for a sufficient reason in the fact alone, that there are cases in which the acquisition of an absolute command over the consciences and understanding of a people, however ignorant or obscure, has been found more gratifying to the pride of the human heart than the possession of the greatest wealth, or the most despotic sway over the reluctant.

In the general picture of the affairs of the colony, when the Duke of Manchester assumed its govern-

ment, the state of the courts of law formed a striking but discouraging object. The reformation of them was an arduous but indispensable task; for the judicial establishment of the province, however well suited to the earlier periods of its existence, when the wants of individuals and the relations of society were few and simple, had long required a corresponding improvement. The points which had formerly involved no great difficulty, and which might have been equitably decided by men possessed of no other qualifications than sound integrity and common sense, were now subjected to the increase of population and commerce, to a more complicated interpretation, and a greater attention to legal forms and distinctions; while an adherence to established rules and precedents became absolutely necessary to secure the rights of individuals and the credit of the island. In the progress from primitive equity to final injustice, the steps are silent, the shades almost imperceptible; the business of life becomes multiplied by the extent of commerce or population, and the residence of the parties in a distant colony is productive of doubt, delay, and inevitable appeals from the local to the supreme magistrate. The Court of Chancery was more certain in its sittings than any other, yet they were not so frequent as the suspended causes evidently required. The irregularities of the inferior courts delayed, or altogether defeated, the rights of suitors; and the non-attendance of the judges was atttributed to an act of the legis-

lature, which, in the year 1804, restricted the increased salary of the chief justice to a barrister, thus depriving the assistants of the prospect of future preferment or reward. The Supreme Court, whose sitting ought to continue during three weeks, was often terminated, by the impatience of the judges, in eight days; while continual interruptions rendered the two assizes of Surry and Cornwall equally discouraging and precarious. The improper constitution of the council had prevented the Court of Error from holding more than three sessions in the course of six years; for, of the seven members who occupied seats at that board, three were judges in the courts below, and therefore unable to review their own decisions; while the magistrates, unacquainted with the principles that can be acquired only by laborious research, were compelled to resort to those loose and arbitrary notions of justice, which vary in every mind, and mark but very imperfectly the definitions of right and wrong.

The Duke of Manchester introduced a spirit of improvement and moderation to the colony, which showed itself in the early though partial redress of these, and many evils of a similar nature. Nor was it possible to apply a perfect remedy at once. It was proposed to form a bench of four barristers in addition to the chief justice; that one only should sit at *Nisi Prius;* and that three should attend in the Grand Court; while their salaries should be so liberal as to induce men of the highest respectability in the

profession to renounce their practice at the bar. The Court of Error, it was suggested, ought to be abolished, and the appeal be made direct to the King in council; while the chancellor should have the power of delegating one or more of the judges to sit for him in the Court of Equity and Conscience.

A.D. 1810. These salutary measures were themselves lost sight of in the hasty dissolution of the Assembly; but they served as the basis of a law which, in the following year, ensured a more regular administration of justice. That edict, however, which enabled the suitors of the supreme and assize courts to appeal directly to the monarch, met with the dissent of the governor, who was probably restrained, in a matter of such moment, by the authority of the crown.

The produce of agricultural labour in Jamaica was now in a most deplorable condition. Until the year 1788, the cultivation of coffee had been of trifling consequence; but the disturbances in Hispaniola directed attention to that additional branch of colonial wealth, and in the four years previous to 1792, the average exportation amounted to the weight of a million and a half of pounds. In the year 1804, it had increased to more than twenty-two millions; and it was now estimated at nearly thirty; which, at the rate of six pounds money per hundred weight, produced an annual income to the cultivators of more than a million and a half. Yet, after deducting the expense of carrying on the plantations, this was no

extraordinary return for a capital of twenty millions which had been invested in their settlement and improvement. The greater part was, however, circulated within the island; while the numerous proprietors who shared it, and who resided on their properties, formed its best bulwark, by personal service in the militia, and by opening roads, and clearing lands, through the extensive forests of the interior.

But this partial state of prosperity was of short duration. Coffee had been cultivated chiefly for foreign consumption; so that when the commercial restrictions of the war were enforced, and the markets of Europe closed by *the Continental System* of the French emperor, the industrious proprietors of those valuable estates were at once involved in irremediable ruin. Their unfortunate condition was not one of gradual decay, or sinking prosperity, such as has often been the case with the agriculturists of Europe: not a diminution of income to be met by rigid economy, retrenchments, or privations; but it was a state of sudden and utter devastation,—a state unknown in England, and hardly even to be believed there. The production of the coffee plantations became absolutely of no value, either to sell, barter, or pledge; while a heavy expense was necessarily incurred for the food, clothing, and medical care, which the laws ensured to the labourers, for public taxes and parochial assessments, and for the support of the proprietor, or the maintenance of a family, residing

probably in England to benefit by that education which was unattainable here.

To improve this scene of ruin, the coffee, though of no value in Jamaica, must be sent to Great Britain alone, where a new debt was incurred for freight and mercantile charges; while an accumulation was formed in the warehouses which left no hope that the proceeds would ever relieve the proprietor from the additional claim of his British creditor. The exuberance of an abundant harvest excited no sensation of pleasure; the proprietor sickened at the additional labour of his people, which he was unable to relieve even by the usual remuneration of their toil. The desperate expedient of abandoning his property, sacrificing two-thirds of his capital, and disposing of the remainder, consisting of slaves and moveables, was also denied him. To force such bodies of slaves from their homes would be a difficult and dangerous attempt, even if purchasers could have been found to take them. But the proprietors of the old-established sugar estates were themselves sinking under accumulated burdens: speculation was at an end, and the rewards of their harvest were painfully earned by the fatigue and anxiety of the revolving year. The duty upon sugar had been so augmented that a very small proportion of what was intended to fall upon the consumer was actually paid by him; but it was levied on the grower, to the insupportable extent of leaving little revenue even from the largest estates, and none at all from the greater proportion

of the small plantations. The average price of sugar was actually below the cost of growing it; and the planter not only cultivated his land for the benefit of the British treasury, but, for the indulgence of being allowed to act as bailiff on his own estate, because that estate happened to lie in the West Indies, a contribution was exacted equal to whatever his produce might sell for *under* the expense of bringing it to market. The most despotic government never before exacted from its subjects their whole revenue, for revolt and anarchy forbade the monstrous attempt; and it was a measure of injustice impracticable under any other circumstances than those of a small and distant province, constituted like Jamaica, and entirely dependent on a vast empire. In such an unfortunate state of existence, if justice be thus disregarded, the stronger hand may easily grasp the possession of the weaker, and the revenue of the industrious be applied to the purposes of a superior power.

Such had been the actual condition of British subjects in Jamaica when the Duke of Manchester relieved them by announcing the future use of sugar in the distilleries of England; a measure which immediately created an effective and annual demand for about fifty thousand hogsheads. The spirit of industry was instantly revived by the hope of enjoyment; and the three succeeding crops, which obtained a fair price, suspended the ruin of the planters. But there the partial benefit was stopped, and the use

of sugar was again prohibited in the manufacture of British spirit. The continental system put an end also to its foreign exportation, and the planter was again reduced to that state which cannot be aggravated when nothing is left to him, though his destruction seemed to advance with more rapid strides when he beheld the Danish islands increasing the stores of sugar which the conquered colonies poured into his only market. The use of spirits, distilled from corn, in the United States, had also reduced the exportation of rum thither, and its value now bore no proportion to that of the imports which the necessities of Jamaica annually required. Under the disadvantages of the British currency, the wary Americans would not take bills of exchange at a fair discount, and nothing was received by them but bullion. A constant drain of gold and silver, the price and standard of all earthly possessions, was, therefore, opened from the island, and the want of a sufficient medium of circulation suggested the alarming expedient of cutting from the centre of the current coin a piece equal to twelve and a half per cent.

A.D. 1811.

It could no longer be concealed even from the most blind enthusiasts, that the maxims of colonial administration had brought Jamaica to a crisis of extreme danger; and a serious reflection might sometimes intrude into the British Cabinet, that when an annual consumption of produce, to the extent of six millions sterling, should be withdrawn from the

starving manufacturers of the nation, and a defalcation of half that amount be at the same time perceived in the public revenue, the popular resentment might be turned against those who had been so fatally deaf to the representations of the colonists. Yet the anti-colonists were so strong as to intercept all effectual relief: the enemies of England might exult in the approaching embarrassments; and the calamities of the planter were aggravated by the declaration of war by the United States—the first object of which was to intercept the convoys from Jamaica. I am at a loss how to vary a narrative that appears more like the language of complaint, than the detail of history, but which deserves attention from its being the preliminary step to the fall of a rich but ruined province. The planters were now deprived not only of their market for a considerable portion of their produce, but even of the means of keeping what they had: for no substitute could be found for the white oak of America, wherewith to form the casks necessary to contain their rum; while the annual loss in that article alone was ruinous, and discouraging in the extreme.

The temporary visit of the Duke of Manchester to Europe placed General Morrison in the chair of the executive, where his conduct was distinguished by the valuable qualifications of zeal, integrity, and ability. He improved the discipline of the militia; and by a strict and unremitted attention to the several courts over which he presided, he conferred

a lasting benefit upon the country. The Court of Errors was restored to its original value in the constitution; while the regularity and industry which, under his eye, enlivened every department of the Chancery, proved that its expenses might be diminished, and those delays prevented, which had formerly detracted so much from the utility of an important branch of judicature. But his government was rendered memorable in the annals of misfortune by an occurrence which neither prudence could foresee, nor power prevent.

A.D. 1812.

On the twelfth of October, a tremendous hurricane burst upon the shores of the island, swept the land of those provisions which the events of war had rendered the sole dependence of the people, and once more threatened the horrors of a famine. This misfortune was succeeded, at the distance of only four short weeks, by a violent and destructive earthquake, which shook all the western world. A volcano had burst its confines on the main; the convulsions were communicated to the ocean; the shores in many places were left dry by the sudden retreat of the sea, and the spectator might contemplate the appearance of vallies, and mountains, which, since the creation, had never been exposed to the light of the sun. The tide soon returned with the weight of an irresistible deluge, and houses were swept away by the impetuous waters. The mature fruits of autumn were destroyed, and the vegetation, even of a southern spring, could not be so rapid as to supply

the demand of a population unaccustomed to the pangs of hunger, yet much too idle to force the produce of the soil. The expedient of exciting industry and skill by the offer of agricultural premiums was resorted to with more liberality than success; and though no greater success could ever call forth the sympathy of the British nation, all relief was rejected by the stern resolves of the cabinet; while the country was left unprotected from the attack of a national enemy, who feared not the guardianship of two small frigates, and as many sloops of war, when property to the value of six millions sterling floated in the bays and harbours of the island. Nothing could be more reasonable than the proposal of the planters, to be allowed to carry away, free from tax, that part of their own produce which Great Britain could not consume; but the delusive hope of taxing foreigners induced the ministers of the crown to seize the hard-earned fruits of their industry, and apply them to the public use, leaving the island in that distress from which it has never recovered *.

The period of General Morrison's government soon expired, and the return of the Duke of Manchester was hailed with those enthusiastic expressions of joy which did him honour, yet no more than justice; while it detracted nothing of the credit and confidence which his lieutenant had so

A.D. 1813.

* See the elaborate report of Mr. Shand to the Assembly—(*Journals*, vol. xii. p. 536,) than which nothing can be more conclusive of the injustice of the British government towards Jamaica.

nobly earned. But the public joy was soon turned into a mournful cry of despair, by the desolating effects of another storm, which ruined the most fertile districts of the island.

The prospect of tranquillity, which was opened by the brilliant and decisive victories achieved by British arms in Europe, at length raised some hopes of relief from such a peace as the fortune of the French emperor might now compel him to submit to. The usurpation of Napoleon, who had received the diadem not only from the army, but also from the people of the empire, had long been successful, and seemed to be secure. A splendid sinner, who entered like a fox, reigned like a lion, and died like a dog, he seemed now to be falling from the zenith of his popularity and power, even within his own dominions. Those who had gazed with astonishment on the ascending meteor, had long since marked the irregularity of its course, the changes of its light and shade; and they soon beheld it set, or seem to set, behind the sea-girt rocks of Elba: an event hailed with the utmost joy by those who, though distant, had been blighted by its meridian power. Paris, the proud city of the arts, was threatened, defended, and taken by a barbarous and almost innumerable enemy. Cossacks and Tartars, Calmucks and the natives of the Don and Wolga, met in the Louvre, or trod upon the silken carpets of the fallen tyrant. The savage natives of the dark and frozen regions of the North,

A.D. 1814.

anxious to change the solitude of their woods and morasses for the wealth and luxuries of more genial climes, basked in the sun of a Parisian summer. The costly productions of European art, and the more lasting monuments of ancient sculpture, collected in the palaces of the proud city, were at the mercy of a host of barbarians, whose want of taste secured the execution of an act of justice by dismantling the splendid galleries, and restoring them to their respective owners.

The overwhelming tyranny which had so long held the continent of Europe in subjection, seemed, indeed, to be completely and finally destroyed. The legitimate sovereign of France, and even the phantom of the Spanish monarchy, were once more seated on the thrones of their ancestors; while all the objects of the war appeared to have been finally accomplished in the restoration of peace to Europe, upon terms of moderation and forbearance. The old world rejoiced in the happy change, but it brought no relief to the distresses of the new; and Jamaica participated only in the general expressions of public joy, and in the enormous expenses of the contest, of which she bore more than an equal share. The taxes in Great Britain fell with the war; but *her* burdens were continued: the war duties, drained from her expensive labour, were undiminished by the peace; and the coffee planter alone obtained relief, when, after a series of years which had buried him in the earth, he once more beheld the continent

of Europe open to the long-neglected fruit of his ruined plantations.

Partially relieved from the apprehensions of war, yet with little to expect from the operation of peace upon her relative position with the parent state, it became the true policy of Jamaica to bestow every attention on the wretched populace, whose stability and improvement could along prolong her existence as a British colony. A race of men which had increased to such an extent as had the free issue of negroes, demanded a new code of laws for its government, and to regulate its privileges in the constitution of the country. The distinctions of ranks and persons is the firmest basis of a mixed and limited government: but the experience of history might have encouraged the hope that this neglected race could be taught the habits of industry and obedience; that the manners of the brown people might be polished by time, education, and the influence of Christianity; and that their posterity would insensibly blend with the body of European colonists, and conduct the negroes in the same path of gradual improvement. The act of the year 1761 was, however, still in force; and by restraining the devises made by white persons to negroes, or their issue, it placed them under disabilities which, in the tender age of the colony, became necessary for the preservation of those distinctions which the peculiar society then required. That law was now repealed: all Christians of free

condition were admitted to give evidence in the various courts of the island; and they were permitted to save deficiency in the militia for all beneath their own colour.

These proofs of a wise and liberal policy were no less creditable than beneficial to the colony, by commencing that system of union amongst the several classes of society which is most likely to promote their mutual advantage. On the subject of religion, an important measure was also proposed, though it did not immediately take effect. A great proportion of the European inhabitants had been educated in the forms of Presbyterian worship, and they had long regretted the want of an establishment to which their numbers certainly entitled them, and where they might offer up their prayers agreeably to their own peculiar rites. They therefore petitioned the Assembly to countenance their church by a law which might enable them to receive donations and bequests, and to purchase and hold real property. A bill, constituting a corporation for the management of the affairs of the Presbyterian establishment, was therefore passed by the House; but it was rejected by the council, who have always fixed their eyes on the visible landmarks of orthodoxy, and who considered this as an encroachment on the supremacy of the national religion.

The same branch of the legislature rejected also a popular law to remove the assize-court from the unfortunate and almost deserted town of Savanna-

la-mar, to the rising capital of the western district. A counter-petition from the threatened hamlet (since the storm and fire, it had deserved no higher title) obtained the majority of one vote, and delayed the desired event until the following year.

When the island was divided into parishes and counties, the district, now the most productive in the culture of the coffee tree, was covered with impenetrable forests, uncultivated, uninhabited, and considered of little value. The three parishes of Vere, Clarendon, and Saint Elizabeth, united their confines in that ridge of hills which, from the centre of the extended chain of the Blue Mountains, runs at right angles to the southern shore. For the greater convenience of the numerous planters who now crowded to a soil found peculiarly favourable to the constitution of a valuable plant, those hills were constituted a distinct parish; and the name of Manchester, already rooted in the breasts of a grateful people, is now perpetuated in their land.

It was the assertion of antiquity, amply proved by history, that where the Roman conquered he inhabited*. Such a proud example has not, however, been imitated by the British conquerors, or colonists, in the West Indies. They consider the parent land as their only country; and their children, and children's children, born in the genial climates of the south, are anxious only to accumulate sufficient wealth to enable them to fly from the land of their

* Seneca in Consulat. ad Hel. c. vi.

birth to an unknown *home*, in the cold and inhospitable regions of the northern ocean. This unsettled disposition begets a spirit of avarice and extortion, which reigns throughout the colonies, and which the principles of society can hardly keep within the bounds of justice. Avidity stains the character of the living, and too often invades the chamber of the dying; while almost every hand, according to its size and strength, grasps at the forfeiture of inexperience, or at the falling prosperity of a more wealthy associate. In the public offices of Jamaica this anxiety to accumulate wealth operated so powerfully, that the interference of the Legislature became necessary to curb it;—and the Chancery, the Island Secretary's office, and the Post-office, were subjected to a minute inspection, and the two former to a liberal reform *.

Nor did the attornies at law, and the officers of the supreme court, escape the action of that broom which was used to cleanse the Augean stables of a liberal profession. But the rigid definition of the fees and salaries was more effectual to confirm the right, than to prevent the abuse. Insufficient remedies followed, with distant and tardy steps, the rapid progress of the evil; and the crowd of legal patriots which immediately rushed into the Senate, and filled all its vacant benches, preserved the interests of the law from further encroachment, at the

* Journals of Assembly, vol. xii., pp. 636, 645, 666.

expense of the country, and perhaps of the constitution.

The peace, which Europe had enjoyed during twelve short months, was again disturbed by the desperate enterprise of the deposed ruler of France, and the treasonable defection of the royal army. The war was rekindled from its ashes by the invading Emperor, or rebel—for his title was not yet ascertained by fortune—and Jamaica, at the distance of four thousand miles, already felt again his blighting influence, when the decisive victory of Waterloo once more arrested his extraordinary career, annihilated his force, and placed his person, distinguished above his subjects by the pre-eminence of fear, at the disposal of the British nation.

A. D. 1815.

The news of this event, which added fresh laurels to the brow of the Duke of Wellington, had scarcely reached Jamaica when the town of Port Royal, whose calamities already inspired a feeling of superstitious awe, again reminded the terrified inhabitants of the fate of the condemned cities in ancient Palestine. This common victim of the convulsions of nature, and of the carelessness of man, was again devoured by the flames of a general conflagration. The close and crowded order of the streets assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence; while the noise of the surrounding waves, the crackling of the flames, and the dissonant cries of the inhabitants and mariners, who could neither

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command nor obey, increased the horror of a nocturnal tumult. Excepting the naval and military establishments, with the church, and a few scattered houses, the ill-fated town, which had once more been enriched by the profitable trade of war, was involved in one common destruction, from which it is scarcely possible for it again to rise. Even the few buildings that were left, experienced the fury of the flames, and still display a melancholy prospect of ruin and desolation. The vigilance of government, and the benevolent sympathy of the public, neglected no opportunity, or precaution, which might relieve the effects of so dreadful a calamity, while the humanity of the Governor alleviated the miseries he was unable to prevent. Every house was thrown open to the distressed inhabitants:—temporary buildings were erected for their accommodation; and a quantity of corn and provisions, supplied by private or municipal liberality, was distributed at a very moderate price. The charitable subscription of the citizens of Kingston alone amounted to the sum of eleven thousand pounds.

The flames had scarcely subsided amidst the ruins of the ancient commercial capital of the West, when a misfortune of a more extensive nature desolated the eastern districts of the island. Another hurricane, accompanied by a preternatural discharge of water from the heavens, destroyed the sugar and coffee plantations, sweeping off all vegetation, or burying it, to the depth of many feet, Oct. 18, 19.

beneath the earth and sand, which the descending torrents washed from the neighbouring mountains. The swoln rivers overflowed their banks, bearing all before them; and the scene of devastation exhibited throughout the parishes of Saint George, Saint David, and Port Royal, could not be equalled by the utmost effect of European storms. Many vessels were stranded on the coast; and, upon land, the victims of this struggle of the elements, who had the good fortune to save their lives, lost all their property. The descent of huge masses of earth from the sides of the hills could be compared only to that of the avalanches in the vallies of the Alps; and the features of the country were materially altered by the dynamic power of the floods.

Since the days of Pinnock, the source of justice in Jamaica had been kept tolerably free and pure, till it was choked again by the art and ignorance of a man whose misconduct gave rise to charges of the gravest nature in the senate. The zeal of the member, himself a judge, who assumed the responsibility of impeaching Chief-Justice Lewis, deserved and received the warmest thanks of the community: yet though the hall echoed with appeals for redress, the investigation was conducted with a spirit of steady moderation, which satisfied the ends of justice, without violating the principles of humanity. In the progress of the inquiry, a multitude of witnesses pressed forward to prove the partiality, the prejudice, the intemperance, or the incapacity of the

accused; and numerous cases of the most flagrant corruption were fully established. The charge of partiality was most clearly proved, and most sensibly felt. If the accused were swayed by gifts in the administration of justice, the example of a Bacon might occur to his mind; but the merit of the man could never atone for his baseness, in degrading the sanctity of his profession as a judge. The weight of testimony, which it was impossible to controvert, or perhaps an ill-judged contempt for the voice of the country, and the authority of the House, forbade any reply in extenuation of the numerous charges. The members of the Senate were, therefore, required to pronounce the guilt of the accused: and their unanimous suffrages condemned him as unfit to fill the seat of judgment. The facts were indeed too well authenticated to admit of any doubt; and of too decisive a nature to leave room for any other sentence. The Governor was immediately addressed by the Assembly, to suspend him from the duties of his office*, and he was finally deprived of it by that expression of public feeling, which left him no choice but to resign it. The Duke of Manchester could calm his resentment, if it were expedient to pardon,—if it were necessary to punish, he could impose silence on the voice of pity; yet his benevolence was excited by the prospect of an aged

* The Governor referred the matter to his Council, and the proceedings of that board rendered it necessary to introduce a law, "to enable the Council to act by a majority of its numbers in questions of suspension of the judges."—(*Journals*, vol. xiii. p. 42.)

judge, who, from affluence, and power almost equal to his own, must now descend to the lowest station of life, shame as his portion, and without the consolation of pity to relieve him. His influence with the Assembly was therefore an act of royal clemency: it was successfully exerted to procure an annuity for the short remainder of a worn-out life; and the Duke felt that, if the execution of justice be a most important duty, the indulgence of mercy is the most exquisite pleasure of a Governor.

A.D. 1816. The period had now arrived when it became the duty of the King's representative to exert the prerogative of the crown, by convening a new Assembly. This was the first time that any governor of Jamaica had beheld the natural death of his own House *: and the Duke, in taking leave of those by whom he had so long been known, bore the most flattering testimony to the success of their labours, and to the zeal, ability, and harmony, with which their deliberations had been conducted. Nor was it the senseless observation of an indifferent politician, or the unmeaning language of a careless governor. With abilities not only useful, but splendid, the Duke of Manchester possessed a vigorous mind improved by the study of books, and the experience of mankind—dexterity in business—a judicious mixture of liberality and economy, of mildness and rigour, steadiness to pursue his end, flexibility

* It is not perhaps generally known that the Septennial Act does not reach Jamaica;—though it is acknowledged there by custom.

to vary his means. His youth had been employed in travel, in the military defence of his country, and in the pursuit of manly sports; but while his hands were busy, he secretly exercised the faculties of a vigorous and discerning mind. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of his rank and fortune; the affability of his manners reflected the image of his heart; and his benevolence appeared in a temper naturally serene and cheerful. Calumny and satire excited his indignation, or, if it were directed against himself, his contempt; but he fettered not the freedom of reasonable wit. His familiar friends were judiciously selected from amongst those who, in the equal intercourse of private life, had appeared before his eyes without a mask: the affections of all were engaged by his address, and those who enjoyed the conversation, acknowledged the taste, of the Duke of Manchester. Throughout the various exercise of supreme power he was peculiarly happy in the choice of his ministers and agents; amongst whom his domestic secretary held a conspicuous place in the public estimation, both in England and Jamaica; and it is with private as well as public regard, that the historian records the eminent services of William Bullock, a statesman, a scholar, and a man of unshaken integrity,—of whom were he to say more the feelings of gratitude might betray him. The mildest authority will, however, sometimes frown, and the lively impatience of the inhabitants of Jamaica has seldom been satisfied with their own situation, or

with the conduct of their successive rulers. It is not, therefore, at all surprising that the Governor who espoused the interests of a colony when it was beset by foreign and domestic foes, should himself have had his enemies, even in the bosom of the country. But he beheld their arts with just disdain, and encountered their secret sentiments with sincere and avowed contempt. It is probable that civil jurisprudence had not, in the early period of his life, engaged any considerable share of his attention: yet, as a chancellor, his decrees were satisfactory and judicious; for he derived, from his reading, an inflexible regard for justice, tempered by a disposition to clemency; the knowledge of the general principles of equity and evidence; and the faculty of unravelling the most intricate and tedious questions which could be proposed for his discussion. He was slow in his suspicions, gentle in his punishments, though strong in his prejudices of the human character; and he had the resolution to resist the two most dangerous temptations which assault the tribunal of a Governor under the specious forms of compassion and equity. He decided the merits of a cause without weighing the circumstances of the parties; and the poor, whom he wished to relieve, were often condemned to satisfy the just demands of a wealthy adversary. He carefully distinguished the judge from the legislator, and pronounced his decrees according to the strict interpretation of those laws which the magistrates are bound to execute, and the people to obey.

The strenuous exertions of the most active patriot could never confer upon his country a greater benefit than did that skilful forbearance which, during the reign of terror in the sister colony of Barbadoes, distinguished the administration of the Duke of Manchester from that of the Earl of Balcarres. A daring insurrection had there been attended with the most fatal consequences: many of the negroes fell a sacrifice to the fatal delusion that their emancipation was intended by the British Parliament, and the most reasonable apprehensions were entertained that the combustible materials of which Jamaica was composed would catch the spreading flame. A spark would, at such a moment, have caused a general conflagration; and three hundred thousand slaves might have broken their chains, or, aspiring to follow the example of Hayti and Barbadoes, have revenged the injuries and disgrace of their captivity. The vigilance of martial law never, indeed, appeared more necessary than at such a moment to protect the island; and it was loudly called for by the terrified inhabitants. But the Duke reviewed the situation of the country, he beheld the ruined state of the finances, with the distress which such a measure must inevitably entail; and although it would have poured wealth into his own coffers, he chose, rather than incur the expense of a military preparation, to depend upon his personal influence with the slaves, who reposed the utmost confidence in a Governor that had already extended so many essential benefits to them,

whose impartiality was unimpeached, and whose ear was ever open to their complaints: Nor was he disappointed in the estimate he had formed of that conduct which endeared him alike to the highest and the lowest orders of society. The slaves resisted all attempts which were made to corrupt them, affording the most satisfactory proof of their fidelity, and of the humane treatment of those under whose authority they were placed. Nor could the country be insensible to these important and repeated services of its Governor. Its gratitude was expressed by an addition to his personal establishment; and his Grace's reply was manly and judicious—that "if he had the good fortune to adopt measures at a particular period with the least charge to the public, it must be ascribed to the intimate knowledge which his long residence had enabled him to acquire of the loyalty and firmness of the inhabitants, which inspired a confidence he would not hesitate to place in them under the most trying circumstances."

The confidence of the country was indeed never more required by its governor, nor his popularity more severely tried, than at a period when he was charged with a peremptory commission which it was scarcely more safe to execute than to disobey—a commission to invade the privileges of the people, and make them confess a crime of which they never had been guilty. The proprietors of Jamaica were commanded to register their slaves, under the most minute particulars, and the heaviest penalties, for the

purpose of preventing or detecting, the supposed introduction of stolen negroes from the shores of Africa; while it was clearly intimated what would be the consequences of refusal. It was in vain that the British minister gilded the hateful measure with an assurance that it proceeded from no impression which had been received of the existence of the evil which it was meant to obviate. The clamour, the bitter invective, which was poured upon the colony from sources very near the Treasury, contradicted the weak assertion; and, regardless of the chartered constitution of Jamaica, a bill had been introduced into the House of Commons*, to compel the colonists to adopt a measure which deprived them of the most valuable privileges of their constitution, and condemned themselves to slavery and reproach. It was artfully expressed that the bill had been suspended in Parliament in consequence of an assurance which had been received from some unknown, or at least unauthorized, quarter, that there existed a disposition in the colonial legislature to adopt the suggestion without compulsion: while the King's ministers assumed the questionable credit of having prevented interference in a matter so liable to be misunderstood, and left the detail of the law, *which must be passed*, to the habits and feelings of the inhabitants.

* This extraordinary bill was introduced by Mr. Wilberforce, and admirably reviewed by Mr. Shand, (*Journals of Assembly* vol. xii. p. 781.) who has undermined the anti-colonists with profound respect, and consummate dexterity.

In the nineteenth century, when the progress of the human mind, and the speculations of enlightened men, appeared to be reducing the people of Europe to a due sense of the advantages of that representative form of government which their ancestors had enjoyed in a very different state of society; when the most despotic sovereigns seemed to be at last sensible of the benefit of admitting their people to a share in the government*; and when France, after wasting her strength in contests for the cause of freedom during more than a quarter of a century, had again turned her eyes to Great Britain as the classic land of liberty, it could hardly have been expected that British statesmen would have proposed to abridge, much less to annihilate, the representative system in any of the provinces of the empire. It might rather have been hoped that some of those imperfections, which creep into all human institutions, would have been corrected as anomalies, instead of being brought forward as precedents to justify further oppression, on the plea that such an exercise of power against justice had, in former ages, been acceded to.

It required the judgment of the most experienced statesman, the aid of the most persuasive pen† and

* It was about the middle of the thirteenth century, that the progress of society introduced the Commons, as a third branch of the legislature, into the national assemblies of England, France, and Germany.

† See the Duke's message to the Senate, in the thirteenth volume of its Journals, p. 7.

language, to place the odious measure in such a light as would induce the colonial legislature to treat it with common respect as a message from the Crown; for it appeared to be no less than calling upon the colonists to be the instruments of their own destruction. When the spirit of freedom has been utterly extinguished, the tamest subjects have sometimes ventured to resist an unprecedented invasion of their rights and property; but injury was now aggravated by insult, and the sense of interest was quickened by that of honour. Had the proposal come in a less questionable shape,—perhaps, had not a threat accompanied it—or even had the country been able to sustain, without much distress, the extraordinary expenses it would entail, the mere registry of the slaves might have been esteemed a measure of some utility, as the possession of such a document by the Colonial Office in Great Britain would have furnished some valuable information to those proprietors who resided there. But forced upon the island without any other reason than one which reflected disgrace upon it, in direct violation of an acknowledged right to legislate internally, and urged by a goading threat that, if it were not adopted here, it would be enforced at home, even though the agitated state of the West Indies might render such violent interference fatal, it was more than the most patient patriot could bear. The assertion of the British minister, "that it was not the emancipation, but simply the registration of the

slaves which was *now* suggested," was enough to open the eyes of the most blind, and to awaken alarm in the breasts of those whose property, whose only means of existence, were thus loosely defined *, and lightly valued.

It became, however, the painful duty of the Duke of Manchester to force this hateful law upon a colony which looked up to him for justice and protection, and was bound, in its relations to him, by the sentiments of a mutual regard. It was difficult for him, therefore, to satisfy, on this important occasion, either the feelings of his own mind, or the expectations of his Royal Master. Instead of participating in the general blessings of peace, and in those measures which relieved the mother country from the pressure of the heaviest taxes, Jamaica was called upon for additional contributions; and at the same time that the annual expenditure of the island was to be increased by the charges under the enactment of the proposed Registry bill, a demand was made upon the liberality of the people to receive and pay such an additional body of troops as might be required to suppress the tumults which that odious law would probably give rise to among the slaves, whose ignorance led them to believe that it was an

* Many attempts have been made to abridge the rights of the local legislature of Jamaica; but they seem to have been always resisted with firmness and effect before this fatal period. They will be found detailed at length in the Journals of Assembly, under the date of 16th November, 1809.

approximation to freedom. This was literally requiring the unfortunate colonists to forge the instruments of their own destruction. The members of the Senate appeared, at first, as if suddenly awakened from a dream of a hundred years, and inspired with the courage rather than the wisdom of their ancestors: but the tumult of the debate was soon hushed; a few declamatory speeches were made; the powerful influence of the Crown was successfully exerted; and they sunk to sleep again, safely locked within Lord Bathurst's arms.

I would willingly hope that it was to satisfy, if they could be satisfied, even the prejudices of their enemies, rather than dispute the fragments of an exhausted colony, that a large majority consented at once to the expensive and degrading provisions of the proposed bill: but some sturdy patriots, whose votes were not to be influenced*, expressed, with dignity and force, their sincere regret " that an Association of the most offensive pretensions, where falsehood and hypocrisy had been detected, could have such power over his Majesty's ministers as to force them to heap contumely and oppression upon a loyal colony, which could behold in no other light the threatened alternative of registration or parlia-

* Feeble and languid was the support which the last advocates of expiring Jamaica met with in the senate, whose Journals record only the name of the brother of a late attorney-general of England, coupled with those of Barrett, Minto, and Storer.

mentary force." The voice of the country was decidedly opposed to the expensive establishment of a law which was to enrol the name and description of every slave, under the heavy penalties of forfeiture and perjury; but the country was not consulted, and the influence which the governor possessed amongst the members of Assembly, imposed upon the inhabitants a triennial tax of more than ten thousand pounds, with the eternal disgrace of having placed the yoke upon their own necks, without one redeeming plea of utility, or even of conciliation, to countenance such an expensive sacrifice to the clamour of unreasonable enemies.

Such was the conduct, such the duty, of the Duke of Manchester, who acted as the representative of his Sovereign, but under the orders of an infatuated minister. In the general administration of peace, or war, the interest of the sovereign is usually the same as that of his people: but if the most reasonable excuses be rejected, few acts of obedience will be found impossible, and guilt must tremble where innocence cannot always be secure. The important, but useless, bill was hurried through its several stages without even that consideration which an ordinary law might claim; and the prodigality of the Assembly seemed to be the feeble and pernicious effect of that imbecility which exhausts the strength, and accelerates the decay, of the powers of life.

The rapidity with which it was carried by a great majority of the members (they styled themselves pa-

triots) would almost inspire the belief that the frequent example of ruin and desolation tempted them not to spare the slender remains of a patrimony which might thus at any time become the prey of power and oppression. The insecure condition of their properties had long since discouraged them from engaging in those useful and laborious undertakings, which require an immediate expense and promise only a slow and distant advantage: but the profuse and useless expenditure of the public funds at this season of distress could have been reconciled only by that indolent despair which enjoys the present hour, and declines the thought of futurity. The paltry refusal of the Legislature to maintain the additional garrison which its own decrees had rendered necessary, was a poor equivalent for the concessions it had made; and even that measure of economy was substantially relinquished to the importunity of a popular governor.

An important and voluntary law, which humanity suggested, and the House at the same time passed, was far more effectual in restraining the licentiousness of power, and securing the happiness of the slaves, than the pernicious enactments of the Registry bill. Their temporal condition was substantially improved by enlarging their privileges, securing their persons, and increasing their holydays, by the addition of the alternate Mondays: their spiritual welfare was provided for by augmenting the clergy, and offering privileges to such as would

embrace Christianity. The pride of the master was not elated by his absolute dominion over the life or happiness of his slave: that dangerous latitude of power had long ceased to exist; and this law swept away the last traces of every abuse which could attend a state of personal servitude—while it removed the possibility of that destitution which offends humanity in Europe, and the distress which swells the pauper lists even in happy England. A guardian council received additional authority in every parish to regulate the subsistence, clothing, and medical care, of the slaves, under the severest penalties upon the offending owners. The Governor might feel it incumbent on him to express his regret that the Assembly had not thought proper to grant all the pecuniary supplies which he was instructed to apply for; but this humane law alone might give him ample reason to congratulate himself on the success of an administration beyond example in the annals of Jamaica.

The disabilities, which had lately been removed from the condition of free persons of colour, gave not the satisfaction which was expected from a people who had hitherto deserved the praise of prudence and fidelity. Some of the most restless were induced to present a petition,—dictated by cunning, and subscribed by folly,—requiring further concessions from the country. The respectable majority of that class expressed, however, its gratitude for the benefits already conferred, and its sorrow that any

portion of its body should have been so indiscreet as to have incurred the censure of the Assembly by a request which could not in reason be complied with.

The interests of the Kirk at length obtained that consideration which the great proportion of the Presbyterians in the colony justly entitled it to; and the Senate, instead of hazarding the fate of another bill, adopted the more substantial mode of establishing it by a vote of three thousand five hundred pounds: expressing, at the same time, its determination to resist the further importunities of a church which could hold only a secondary rank in Jamaica. The Wesleyan Missionaries, also, presented another petition, or memorial, which frankly confessed that they levied contributions upon the poultry-yards, the provision-grounds, or the pockets, of the slaves*, yet again claimed the praise of disinterested motives, unaffected piety, and religious zeal, in the exercise of their pious labours. The conduct which disclaims the ordinary maxims of reason, excites our suspicion, and often eludes our inquiry: yet while the sectarians continue to drain their subsistence from the scanty resources of the unsuspicious slaves, for whose religious instruction the country already pays near forty thousand pounds per annum, it will be as diffi-

* Journals of Assembly, vol. xiii. p. 11. "We receive no salary, or emolument, *from home*," &c. During a famine in one of the islands, the Missionaries were obliged to live upon cod fish, "without a bit of butter to render it palatable," laments the tender-hearted Doctor Coke with holy zeal.

cult to persuade the rational observer that they are not connected with politics foreign to their mission, as that they are free from interested motives. In an age of religious controversy, when there are as many creeds as opinions, every act of opposition adds, however, new force to the elastic vigour of the mind; and though far from being convinced that pure religion *is* their motive, the legislators of Jamaica seem determined to tolerate the interference of the sectarians, even in a much greater latitude than the true interests of the slaves would probably allow*. Philosophy alone can boast,—and perhaps it is no more than the boast of philosophy,—that her gentle hand is able to eradicate from the human mind the deadly principle of fanaticism; but long before philosophy can visit the cabin of the negro, it is to be apprehended that the religious frenzy, which is now so rapidly gaining ground, will have rendered her operations useless, and her care uncalled for, in Jamaica at least.

While these proceedings of the colonial legislature advanced or retarded the ruin of the province, its trade was daily suffering by the privateers of Hayti, and the improper application of the naval force stationed for its protection; for the lucrative employment of conveying bullion from the ports of Spanish America had for some time occupied the attention of the fleet. A nefarious trade, carried on with the

* See Note XLVI.

neighbouring republic of blacks, and which treacherously supplied them with British arms and ammunition, had also introduced a great number of persons of a suspicious character, and the Governor was requested to order their immediate removal: for the continual disturbances which agitated the city of Kingston countenanced the report of a dark and dangerous conspiracy. He perceived the extent of the danger and the necessity of checking it at once; and though he ever proved himself more attentive to relieve the innocent than to punish the guilty, he now lent his reluctant aid, by exercising that power which the alien law of Jamaica, far less oppressive than that of England, unquestionably gave him.

## Chapter XVIII.

Disorders in Great Britain.—Premature and perpetual Decay of her Colonies.—Rejection of the Attornies' Bill.—Prorogation of the House.—Its triumph.—Case of Chief Justice Jackson, and of General Marshall.—Kirk Petition rejected.—The King's death.—Providential escape of the Duke of Manchester.—Lieutenancy of General Conran.—Dispute between the Council and the Assembly.—Custom House Regulations.—Return of the Duke of Manchester.—Condition of the Slaves.—Proposals of the Dominica Assembly.—Military Innovations.—Case of Lescesne, and L'Escoffery—"The Yellow Book."—Conspiracies and Rebellion of the Slaves.—Conduct of the General commanding.—Trinidad Order in Council.—The Bishop of Jamaica.—Ports opened to Foreign Vessels.—Slave Evidence Bill rejected;—renewed, and passed.—Final Departure of the Duke of Manchester.—Lieutenancy of Major-General Sir John Kean; and Wreck of the Colony.

[A.D. 1816—1828.]

Notwithstanding all the caution and address of the Duke of Manchester, his government now exhibited a deplorable picture of rapid and irrecoverable decay. The colony was destroyed in detail: the ears of the British Parliament were shut against the reiterated complaints of the Assembly; the monarch, always distant, and often deceived, heard not the faint murmur of colonial distress, and even if he did, the waves of the ocean weakened the powers of control. In the general calamities of nations, the dissolution of a single province, however

A.D. 1816.

famous, is often passed over with careless indifference; yet there are circumstances which may call the reluctant attention of the most reckless or powerful statesman, to the preservation of those resources, however remote, which his mischievous policy has endangered. In such circumstances was England herself now placed; for the disturbances which arose at the conclusion of the war reminded the advisers of the crown that they trod on a thin and slippery ice, which might break under their footsteps, and plunge them in the abyss. The pressure of that general distress which had been long felt in Jamaica, fell with irresistible weight upon the manufactures and agriculture of Great Britain, when so many channels for the stream of commercial life were shut, or arrested on her land, and conveyed, by the equivocal blessings of peace, over the whole continent of Europe. England had grasped and abused the fruits of her success, and after running a course of splendid but expensive glory, was now fainting in her own weakness. Multitudes were thrown out of employment, and their idleness was amused by the arts of the disaffected, who persuaded them that no practicable relief could be found except in the violation of the laws, and the subversion of the constitution. The taxes, though much reduced, were rendered still more oppressive by the sudden deprivation of the means to pay them; nor were the people of England quite so patient under their grievances as those of Jamaica. Though the subversion of an established government is always a work of some

real and much apparent difficulty, the throne appeared to shake beneath the open or concealed efforts of a disordered populace; and the prosperity of a nation which had saved Europe, and been fashioned by a war of more than twenty years, sunk under the influence of a few months of repose too long delayed. The nations of Europe were worn out by the efforts they had made, and the prophecy of the philosophic Mayor of Bourdeaux seemed in progress to fulfilment: for as the sun set to the eastern hemisphere, it arose with increased splendour upon the virgin soil of the western continent, where liberty and independence breathed a free and invigorating air*.

Those who had long practised the arts of calumny against the inhabitants of Jamaica now felt the anguish of the wound which they had inflicted, and suspended their attacks under the common hardships of an adverse fortune, which discovered the fears, the suspicions, almost the repentance of a ministry too long subservient to a powerful and a hostile faction. After a calamitous period of nearly half a century, Jamaica, though no more than a shadow of her former self, still continued to supply fresh materials for fiscal extortion; and their total loss might be seriously apprehended, when the finances of the empire required every aid to rescue an idle and a starving population from the errors of example and rebellion. The grateful pause was, however, but momentary; for the anti-colonists (a new race

* See Note XLVII.

of patriots) exerted an unrelenting perseverance, and the repentance, which pain had extorted, was forsworn on the return of health. The weight of taxes, that perpetual theme of popular complaint, was continued as heavy as ever on Jamaica; and the Regent was pleased to express his approbation of the subservience which had been shewn in the enactment of the Registry law, an approval which might gratify or insult the inhabitants. But as soon as the supply of an abundant harvest had hushed the waves of the troubled multitude at home, the tide of popular resentment was turned again, with all its force, upon the colony. Every ear was shut, and every circumstance was adverse to its lawful claims. Although the source, from whence a supply of labourers could be obtained, was cut off from an island lying waste for want of cultivation, and the few it possessed were rapidly decreasing by the natural death of the elder and most numerous Africans, the destruction of property was wantonly increased by the clamour which directed the attention of the planters to the constant diminution of that labour which, in its utmost extent, could never approach the daily toil of the British husbandman. Emissaries from Saint Domingo, in spite of every precaution, were still busily employed in seducing the negroes from their obedience, from their owners, and the island; while the British government encouraged that species of robbery by a declaration, "that the laws of Hayti much resembled those of Great

Britain, so far as not to permit persons who have once landed in that island to be considered or treated as slaves*."

Such was the usage which Jamaica experienced in return for her blind and weak subservience; and the colonists were perhaps too much inclined to impute to the mischievous policy of the minister the misfortunes which were the consequence of their own degeneracy. Whatever consolation they might derive from the indulgence of just reproach, they should have remembered that the most cruel execution is usually inflicted, not in the ranks of battle, but on the backs of a pusillanimous and flying enemy; and it would have been strange indeed if they had purchased, by the resignation of their constitutional independence, a secure and solid tranquillity—or if their tame acquiescence in the terms of the Registry Bill had not invited a repetition of injuries and extortion. Yet they had the satisfaction of beholding the salutary operation of those voluntary laws which their own humanity and experience had lately framed for the benefit of the slaves, who, in spite of all the efforts which were made to mislead them, became satisfied that their welfare was that alone which engaged the attention of their masters. The negroes observed, with pleasure, that their

* See Lord Bathurst's letter, in reply to the application made by Admiral Douglas to the Admiralty for instructions. (*Journals of Assembly*, vol. xiii. p. 182.) A late decision of Lord Stowell's would now alter the principle in law.

grievances, real or imaginary, were investigated with patience, and removed with promptitude; while the increase of their suits, both civil and criminal, accompanied with the greatest subordination, afforded the most convincing proof that their confidence was not misplaced on the justice of those to whom they thus appealed. Such a feeling, whilst it operated on their present condition by lessening the possibility of their being exposed to injury without receiving redress, was calculated, unless interfered with by their mistaken friends, to impart those principles which would enable them to estimate the benefit, to acquire the habits, and to practise the duties of a more improved state of society.

The depression of agriculture under the intolerable load of taxes, the consequent increase of debt, and of those individual grievances which can be adjusted only by the interference of the law, drew attention once more to the practices of those who, with cunning rather than skill, exercised a sordid and pernicious trade in the lower departments of the legal profession. Its honour might, indeed, be vindicated by some who conducted the causes of their clients with pure integrity and consummate skill; but there were many who considered that every opportunity might be taken advantage of to encourage litigation, and prepare an harvest of gain for themselves, or for their brethren. Careless of fame, and still more careless of justice, they conducted the suits, which were intrusted to them, through a maze of expense,

of delay and disappointment, from whence they were often dismissed when the purse and the patience were exhausted. To curb this licentiousness became the duty of the legislature, and the object of a bill which was warmly contested by the proprietors of the land against the members of the profession, who, with their friends, filled nearly half the benches of the senate. A majority of only four enacted the law which was intended to regulate their proceedings, and fairly to curtail their fees; and the event was hailed as one of the utmost importance to the landed interests of the colony. The members of the Council alone thought otherwise. That board attempted to amend the law, to establish, in fact, an oppressive rate of fees; and to restore to the harpies of the profession all those facilities of oppression which it was the object of the country to deprive them of. The law was rejected by the feeble voice of one. The representatives of the people could not but resent an interference which violated their asserted right to guard the pecuniary interests of their constituents; but instead of adopting the usual mode of strict retaliation, by withholding the public supplies, they afforded the Council an opportunity of retracting its pretensions, by sending up another bill with the same provisions as the last: for the Governor had resorted to the conciliating measure of a short prorogation, to prevent such an issue as might have resulted from the opposition of patrician obstinacy to popular clamour. The zeal of the

Council had been excited by interest: it was soon cooled by opposition, and twenty-four hours were amply sufficient to convince its members that their resistance against the voice of the country was fruitless. The renewed bill passed the three estates without further discussion, though with little effect; for the continuance of those abuses which it was intended to remove is still attested by the ruin of thousands, the repetition of impotent laws, and the reiteration of ineffectual complaints.

That a measure which was thus intended to curtail the unreasonable profits of the profession originated in no illiberal feeling, nor in the indulgence of a mean frugality, was sufficiently proved by an arrangement which did honour to the country and justice to a meritorious individual, and which met with the warmest approbation of the public. The fees appertaining to the office of chief justice were abandoned, and the independence of the chair was secured by the sterling salary of four thousand pounds. The individual whose merits suggested, and whose integrity was rewarded with this seasonable liberality, proved himself worthy of it by the firm determination with which he defended his judicial freedom when, in the following year, he was summoned to the bar of the Assembly to answer an alleged breach of its privileges. An appeal had been made by an old and highly respected member of that House against a decision of the judge, who felt himself bound by those principles

A.D. 1818.

of independence which can alone ensure the impartial administration of justice, to decline any examination which might bind him, by the obligation of an oath, to divulge information acted upon in his judicial capacity. In treating this prudent reserve as a violation of its privileges, the Assembly did not, perhaps, sufficiently consider the effect which calling upon a judge to disclose the grounds of his decisions must have in bringing the bench into contempt; but, with the haste of wounded pride, it ordered him a prisoner to its bar. Upon hearing the charge against him, he resolutely declared that he could not take the oath "without compromising his conscience as a man, and making a deliberate surrender of his independence as a judge." The Assembly probably saw its error, or was unwilling to press a question which the voice of the people already gave so loudly in favour of a man justly esteemed throughout the community; and when the sore dispute was reduced to the simple question, whether he intended to violate the privileges of the House, Chief Justice Jackson replied, "Unquestionably not. In refusing to take the oath, I intreat the house to be assured, that I had no intention to invade its privileges, but simply to maintain my own." The triumph of the judge was complete—alike honourable to himself, and important to the colony, which enjoyed only too short a time his strict adherence to a firm and impartial principle. Of human life the most glorious or humble prospects are alike, and

soon bounded by the sepulchre; and he was shortly after summoned by the angel of death. The country had suffered too much from the base conduct of a late judge, not to value the services of such a man; but a tear and a tomb were all it could bestow, and the public sorrow proved that there yet remained one panegyric beyond the suspicion of all flattery.

His successor was appointed during the perverse administration of General Conran; and the expectations of the country were disappointed by the preference given to one of the lowest practitioners at the bar over the superior merits of an Attorney-General who was at the head of his profession,* and whose abilities had long been tried. If the universal regret of the colony evinced the impropriety of the appointment, the event proved that it was not without reason: for the intemperance of the judge has ever since been the subject of general complaint. In the year 1824 a petition was presented to the Assembly seeking protection against his alleged oppression; and in the following year the voice of popular complaint was strengthened by three others, to which he was heard in reply. The Committee came to a decision, that "a grievance had been committed against the complainants,"—but the Assembly was patient; and it went no further *.

The peace of the island was now undisturbed, and the afflicted inhabitants enjoyed a transient and fallacious calm: but it was a deadly slumber,

* See Note XLVIII.

for all their institutions were sinking into ruin and forgetfulness. The native vices of the slaves, which had formerly prompted acts of bloodshed and insurrection, seemed to be subdued: the elder Africans were disappearing fast—the younger were softened by the influence of Christianity; and if they sometimes attempted to throw off their chains, they abstained from acts of violence, or rebellion, and withdrew to the woods for concealment. Though this was less dangerous to the immediate tranquillity of the island than such outrages as had formerly marked the conduct of the newly-imported negroes, it could not escape attention that the impunity with which such bodies were suffered to collect must one day be productive of the most serious mischief.—Thousands had thus assumed their liberty*, were preying upon the fruits of industry, seducing the lazy, and living in the state of barbarous banditti, while the Legislature was passive, and the Maroons idle. The Duke of Manchester perceived the extent of the increasing evil, and necessity of applying a speedy and effectual remedy. A considerable body of these deserters had already established itself within eight miles of the metropolis, in the wooded wilderness of the Healthshire hills. They had formed a rude town in that wild district; and, cultivating the most productive spots, attended the neighbouring

* It is calculated that, at the present moment (1827), not less than twenty thousand slaves are leading a life of lawless barbarity in the woods *and towns* of Jamaica.

markets for the purpose of bartering their vegetables for animal food, or the more dangerous acquirement of arms and gunpowder. A wide extent of coast lay open to them; the enemies of Jamaica were active, and designing; and it was more than suspected that a channel of communication was there kept open with a neighbouring colony of black barbarians. Their strength, and the apparent security of a mountainous country of vast resources and considerable extent, inhabited by themselves alone, had encouraged this formidable band of robbers to issue from its haunts, and commit repeated outrages on the neighbouring properties. The Governor assumed the responsibility, therefore, of employing several parties of the Maroons, under an experienced officer, to dislodge them, and destroy their settlements. This arduous service was effected by the zeal and judicious arrangements of General Marshall; and the most complete success attended an enterprise which had only been too long delayed. The sequel, however, was unfortunate: for, because that officer had found it necessary to add to his disorganised force a detachment of the militia which he commanded,—or perhaps it might be rather attributed to the jealousy of party spirit alone which made use of such a flimsy pretext,—the Assembly instituted so rigorous an inquiry, that the active vigilance of the country has ever since been paralyzed. The attempt has not been repeated, the runaways have again increased to a most alarming

A.D. 1819.

extent; and though an impartial, yet tardy verdict fully exonerated the meritorious officer, it left no triumph but to the partisans of disorder and rebellion.

The apprehensions of those who perceived in the establishment of the Kirk the commencement of an annual charge upon the island treasury, were confirmed by the event. A clergyman had arrived from Scotland, and, with laudable diligence, two schools were established under his immediate care: yet neither the private subscriptions, nor the public donations, could support the heavy charges. The Assembly was, therefore, applied to for its assistance, and the votes were decided by a majority of one; but that one was adverse to the interests of the church of Scotland. So substantial a proof of the number of inhabitants who adhered to its forms of worship, justified, however, its future support by the country; and five hundred pounds have since been annually contributed to an establishment which does credit to its managers, and has conferred important benefits on the island *.

The continued depression of agriculture called, however, for the utmost economy in the expenditure of the public money. The Northern states had pledged themselves to distinguish, in their commercial regulations for the importation of colonial produce, between governments which had abolished, and those which still maintained, the trade in slaves:

* See Note XLIX.

but Jamaica looked in vain for the adoption of this equitable principle, which would have given her immediate relief, by depriving the foreign colonies of that power of unfair competition which they enjoyed under the privileges of more extended resources, and the stimulus of a larger profit. The cultivation of the sugar-cane was far less expensive to the subjects of Spain and Portugal, whose fields were daily supplied with fresh and vigorous labourers, than to the inhabitants of the British isles, who had rigidly and faithfully complied with the abolition laws. Those colonies possessed facilities which gave them an ascendant in the foreign markets, against which it was impossible for Jamaica to contend; and the partial alleviation which had been afforded by parliament had long since ceased. The generosity of the British ministers had ever been cold and tardy; and the only market allowed for the productions of the colonies was surfeited by the foreign islands, and by the East Indies: so that the plantations (I must again repeat) not only ceased to make any return for capital or labour, but, in many cases, yielded no indemnity against their annual, and unavoidable, expenditure, while a perpetual and premature decay marked every feature of the country. A.D. 1820. The death of the King, and the accession of George the Fourth, presented a favourable moment once more to urge the justice of the colonial claims. But the power of monarchs is more effectual to destroy than to revive; and the inhabitants

of the West Indies were the last people on earth who could move compassion in the breasts of the British nation, aspersed as they were with the foulest calumnies, by those who took advantage of their distance and their weakness.

It has been observed that the disorders of the moral are frequently connected with those of the physical world, and that an accident happening to an individual, or an acrimonious humour falling on a single fibre of one man, has been the ruin of thousands, and changed or suspended even the fate of nations. In the midst of all her difficulties Jamaica looked with confidence to the exertions of a single hand; and the continuance of that repose which indigence, or obscurity, may yet enjoy, appeared to depend upon the existence of one who, by his judicious management, had so eminently procured it. That life had nearly been lost by an accident which proved at once its estimation, and its real value. The Duke of Manchester was thrown from his carriage, and rendered insensible by a blow from one of the unmanageable horses, which struck him on the head, and fractured the skull; a fragment of which was literally discovered mingled with the dust on the road. Human aid appeared to be of no avail, and he was borne to his palace amidst the lamentations of a despairing multitude. The business of the session was instantly suspended, prayers for his recovery were offered up in all the churches, and the intense anxiety of the people was the noblest tes-

timony of merit. The timely assistance of the most eminent surgeons was seconded by the vigour of an excellent constitution, and eventually it effected a perfect cure. The skill of the faculty was honourably rewarded with five hundred guineas from the public purse; and the accident produced a result no worse than the temporary absence of the Governor, who returned to Europe for the re-establishment of his health, and the installation of Major-General Conran as his Lieutenant.

The decay of the colony has thus been frequently accelerated by the loss of its most able supporters, and at a time when it had most need of them. The period of the Duke's departure was marked also by the retreat of the Speaker of the Assembly from the activity of the legal profession, and the responsible duties of the official chair. His brother members yielded the pre-eminence of rank to the ascendant of superior genius, and Mr. Lewis had filled the situation during a period of unexampled difficulty, and distress, when ability and exertion were required to guard the privileges of the people from the violation of the Imperial parliament. He left, indeed, an arduous task to his successor, yet one which experience has since proved that he was fully able to perform.

The incurable madness of faction was bitterly exemplified in the short administration of General Conran; a soldier whose life had been spent, and whose opinions had been formed, in the splendid

slavery of an Eastern court. It is difficult to ascertain, yet easy to exaggerate, the causes which rendered his administration one of contention and reproach between the friends of the Duke of Manchester and a venal few, who thought the chance of his return so slender, that they had better reap the harvest which was ripe. In this web the government of General Conran was for ever entangled; and the event justified, by a new example, a vulgar truth, that flattery adheres to power, and envy to superior merit. In the early and unexpected exercise of the supreme power, the object of the General seemed to be to select his friends and advisers from amongst the few who, from prejudice or principle, had been opposed to the administration of the Duke of Manchester; while a spirit of factious ingratitude shewed itself in the Assembly by preventing that honourable testimony being paid to the Duke which would have continued to him his additional establishment during his temporary absence. Trained in the exercise of arms, the Lieut.-Governor transferred the austere discipline of the camp to the civil administration of the colony; while the ceremonies of a military parade pervaded every branch of the executive, and succeeded to those unostentatious manners which gave easy access to his illustrious predecessor.

The candour of history will not, however, refuse to General Conran the credit due to an administration conducted with a becoming mixture of spirit

and moderation, under the peculiar disadvantages of the succession, and the difficulties which oppressed the credit and resources of the colony. The discouragement given to industry, and the impossibility of raising taxes to meet the exigencies of the insular establishment, and in addition to the enormous sums which were seized for the revenue of the empire, were certainly embarrassments sufficient to perplex the most patient and discreet: yet he obtained from the gentle influence of corruption* the obedience which would, no doubt, have been refused to the stern mandates of authority; and if he did not obtain, or, at least, deserve the esteem of those about his person, he contrived to gain the tacit suffrages of the greater portion of his subjects. Though his vanity was not always capable of discerning how often submission degenerated into the grossest adulation, he so far conciliated the temper of the senate as to secure for himself and his successors an important addition to his establishment, by the exchange of fifty-six domestic slaves for the annual allowance of a thousand pounds; and by the application of a considerable sum of money, to furnish the various apartments of his palace.

If the severity of General Conran was sometimes dangerous to the innocent, it was always formidable to the guilty; and the stern inflexibility with which

* "Qui non dorsa cædit, sed ventrem palpat." History has applied the word "closeting" to the prevailing system of the second James.

he administered justice in behalf of the slave, was exemplified in the following remarkable case:— A negro, of the most infamous character, was condemned to death, by three associated magistrates, for returning from transportation, which previous sentence had been humanely passed upon him for crimes that subjected him to capital punishment. By an error in judgment, these magistrates did not conceive it necessary to call him before a jury for the second offence, but merely identified his person, and he was hanged. The instant the omission was made known to the Lieut.-Governor, they were all superseded, disgraced, deprived of their various public appointments, and indicted by the crown for wilful murder. In all these acts of degradation was included the senior magistrate, the custos of the parish, a man of unblemished character, and connected with one of the most illustrious families of Great Britain. He was a hundred miles distant when the occurrence took place, and no further implicated in it than sharing the responsibility which attaches to the association of incompetent judges. They all took their trials for the alleged murder; and though a verdict restored them to society, no interest was effectual in rendering back the appointments they had held. It was in consequence of this transaction that the law was altered, and now places capital punishment in the hands of the executive alone.

The harmony which it was the interest, perhaps

the desire of General Conran to maintain between the several branches of the legislature, met with a serious interruption during his first session, by one of those incidental struggles which have already wearied the patience of the reader. The annalist of an empire might overlook the petty disputes which are confined to the obscurity of a distant province; and it would violate the dignity, rather than the faith of history, to record all those which have so frequently divided the attention of the Jamaica legislature, ending uniformly in the submission of the Council, and the triumph of the Assembly. In this case, however, the popular branch was the unconstitutional aggressor, and the novelty of that circumstance may justify a detail of the fact.

The fees exacted by the officers of the customs had been increased in an unreasonable degree; and as the ability of the ship-owners to pay them had been diminished by the reduction of freight since the termination of the war, a law had been framed to remedy the growing evil: but it was found to have established rather than removed the abuse; for by some strange perversion of what had thus become a legal demand, the fees were augmented at least twenty per cent. The merchants of the two great commercial towns, Kingston and Montego Bay, petitioned for relief; and a more fair and efficient enactment was proposed. From the latter port a complaint was also made, that ships' boats, and vessels of inconsiderable burden, were taxed

as others; an abuse which arose, probably, from the emoluments of the more unfrequented ports being placed disproportionably below those of Kingston, where numbers made good the loss. To redress the original evil, a bill was framed, discussed, and rejected by a small majority: to remove the partial subject of complaint, the House, which knew the temper of the Council, chose, rather than risk a law for its approval, to insert in the body of the Revenue act an extraneous clause, forbidding the abuse complained of. That act could not be rejected without depriving the country of its annual supplies, and the Assembly exulted in the success of a legislative stratagem which must enforce obedience. Had not the Council been bound by the nature of its constitution to maintain the interests of the crown, and consequently those of its officers, such an artifice as this might still have roused its slumbering sensibility: but the novelty of the manœuvre was not less striking than the danger of the encroachment; and, at all hazards, the bill was rejected with indignation. The Assembly instantly requested the Lieut.-Governor to delay the sailing of the packet; and, with embarrassing effrontery, at the same time demanding a recess, leaving the country without any pecuniary provision. A prorogation was the only measure which could lead to an adjustment of the difference, or the grant of the necessary supplies. The House met again on the following day, made a feeble attempt to justify its proceedings,

and again triumphed over the obedient Council, whose prudence or whose weakness left it no alternative but to submit.

The sugar estates were, in the mean time, suffering very severely, and the excessive duties, which long had checked, threatened totally to extirpate, the cane, as they had long since done the indigo. Many properties were surrendered to the wild growth of nature, or were seized for their accumulated debts. The principles of obedience were destroyed in the minds of the negroes by their transfer to other owners, and to distant settlements; while the change of property, which dissolved the ties that bound them to their masters, increased their apprehension of the future so far as to prepare them for any other change which accident or design might propose. The Portuguese and Spanish colonies, no longer blockaded by a British fleet, were enriched by the increased supply of fresh Africans; and thus enabled to maintain an advantage, against which it was impossible for the Jamaica planter any longer to contend: while the low rate of labour in India* much more than compensated the importation of Asiatic sugar for the greater length of carriage. The project of forcing the western possessions of Great Britain into a competition with those of the east, had indeed confounded both countries under the common designation of colonies:—but the arts of an interested party could scarcely conceal

A.D. 1822.

* See Note L.

the fact, that the Western Indies were settled by British subjects, speaking the same language, living under the same laws, and venerating the same religion, as their countrymen; while Eastern India is not only essentially foreign to England, but to every thing which cements society in her own quarter of the globe. Hitherto the high price of rum had somewhat retarded the ruin of the planters, and relieved the loss on sugar; but now each product of the cane was below the cost of culture; and although the British parliament had so far relaxed the rigour of the navigation laws as to permit an intercourse with foreign parts, the boon was granted too late to afford any effectual relief. Most of the proprietors had long since been compelled to borrow large sums of money, for the support of their families or slaves, securities for which were in the hands of the British merchants, who stipulated for the entire produce of their estates, which otherwise might have found a better market in the foreign ports of Europe: while the slowness with which trade flows through channels long obstructed, was exemplified in the little intercourse even between Ireland and Jamaica. Nothing, it appeared, could afford any prospect of relief, but the unequivocal and universal abolition of the slave trade; an event which might place the agriculturists of Jamaica upon a footing with the industrious in other countries: but as that seemed beyond the reach of England's power, an alleviation was justly demanded by a fair dimi-

nution of oppressive taxes. The calamity was, however, in the West Indies, the succour in Great Britain; and sympathy is cold to the relation of distant misery. The progress of relief, and even of inquiry, was stopped by the seasonable abuse of the sinking colony; and humanity might drop a tear on the fate of many an industrious planter who beheld the destruction of his hopes, and the ruin of his helpless children.

The most salutary laws of Jamaica were already inscribed with the name of the Duke of Manchester, and the evils which had been sanctified by time and example were corrected by his master-hand; but some enactments of an important nature adorned the lieutenancy of General Conran. Amongst the various schemes for the improvement of the internal revenue, was one which might reduce the rate of the public salaries;—and it was a little unfortunate that the rejection of such a measure should have followed close upon the piteous cry of distress which, in the language of a petition, at the same moment ascended to the throne. Always prodigal, and often poor, it was thus that the colony so often effaced the seasonable impressions it had made; and the alternative of relieving agriculture by a tax of ten per cent. on all persons who derived emoluments from the public purse, was feebly supported by the voices of four against a majority of twenty-one. The taxes seemed, indeed, to be multiplied with the public distress, and economy was neglected in pro-

portion as it became more necessary, though in one instance it was thoughtlessly extended to an absurd excess; for the money which was lavished on the most useless and unworthy objects, was denied to the real improvement of the country. A taste for building, however costly, may deserve some praise, and much excuse, even in times of pecuniary distress; for by that, industry is fed, art is encouraged, and some object of public convenience or pleasure is attained. The expense of erecting the suite of rooms which completed the southern side of the square in the town of Saint Jago was borne without a murmur; but the utility of public roads, so much more obvious and solid, was disregarded and denied by the sudden parsimony of the Assembly, which suspended the annual grant of fifteen thousand pounds.

The arrangements or the abuses of the Custom-House were still a fertile source of grievance and discussion; but the guardianship of the council again prevented all interference with the prerogative of the crown. The continued depredations of the attornies-at-law, and of the officers of the chancery department, met with fewer advocates: yet, though they were loudly deprecated, they were but ineffectually redressed; and the day which hailed the return of the Duke of Manchester was rendered memorable by a dangerous expedient to obtain some temporary advantage, or avert some impending danger, by drawing a fund of artificial wealth from the issue of a paper currency.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which was greeted the return of a Governor, under whom innocence had nothing to fear, while merit had everything to hope. The torrent of public joy was loud and irresistible. The insects which had basked in the sunshine of a short and factious day, disappeared at his approach, while they excited his contempt, without deceiving his penetration. If General Conran did not participate in the common feeling, it was the error of a suspicious temper, which induced him to quit the palace long before its expected tenant could approach it; and in the privacy of his own house to maintain an ambiguous reputation. He soon afterwards retired from Jamaica to a life of repose, perhaps of content; for he received the approbation of his Sovereign, and the honourable reward of a regiment.

When the Duke resumed the reins of government, he expressed his gratification, perhaps rather his surprise, that the difficulties under which the colony still laboured had not repressed the liberality for which it had so long been distinguished: an ambiguous observation, I shall presume to observe, which, according to the circumstances of the times, might be construed rather as a censure than a compliment. Surrounded by difficulties, and under the pressure of accumulated distress, a fixed resolution seemed still to be adhered to by the British cabinet to retain, in times of peace, and without abatement, those intolerable duties which had been levied, amidst the

embarrassments of war, upon the principal articles of West Indian production; while prejudices against the unfortunate possessors of a species of property which none could envy, pervaded every branch of society in the parent state. The reputed crimes of half a century were ascribed to the present race of colonists, and palmed upon the credulous public as of recent date. They were described as "unrelentingly cruel"—"a white mob"—"white oppressors"—"white savages"—"to whom the foulest exhalations of a slave-ship were fragrance, and the deepest groans of the dungeon sweetest music:" persons whose "laws were expressed in the language of insult, and in characters of blood *." One of the leading, most influential, and most skilful publications of the age, declared, that "if the work"—(nothing short of giving the utmost license of freedom to a barbarous host) "were not done, the negroes would do it themselves, and the bulk of their fellow-subjects would rejoice that it was done, however deplorable the consequences might be †!"

Nothing can be more true than this assertion, probably; and the enemies of the colonies found, it is to be hoped, a consolation for such a cruel

* I have freely used an admirable but anonymous pamphlet, entitled, "An Address to the Members of the New Parliament," 1826: classical in its composition, logical in its argument, and convincing in the proof. The history of ministerial imbecility is not complete without this book.

† The Edinburgh Review. See Note LI.

suggestion in the testimony of their own consciences, the approval of their party, and, perhaps, the success of their indefatigable exertions. It was in vain that the first legal authority of the realm declared from the woolsack, that "when he found the system of slavery instituted, fostered, and encouraged by the British laws, and under the auspices of the highest sanction, he should hesitate a long time before he ventured to say, that it was contrary to the genius of the British empire." It was in vain that the same high authority expressed a conviction, "that the improvement of the negroes had been more retarded by the intemperate zeal of their distant advocates, than it had been, or could be, by any opposition on the part of those who may be adverse." The most enlightened statesman* of the age was not listened to, when he declared, that "if the condition of the slave was to be improved, that improvement was to be introduced through the medium of the master alone." Even Mr. Brougham †, who seems to have preserved as much reason and humanity as may be reconciled with the character of a modern saint, vainly exclaimed, "Any parliament which should attempt to legislate for the colonies must give up legislating for the mother country. Let this branch of imperial administration be left, then, to the care of those who are themselves most interested in the good order and government of

* Mr. Canning, in the House of Commons.
† See Note LII.

those distant provinces." To all reason and evidence, it was simply replied by the colonial minister, that he would call down the vengeance of the King in council, if the Assembly of Jamaica did not immediately comply with the proposals which he was then preparing, and whose tendency was to wrest their little property from their hands, and turn them beggars on the world.

Before they were thus attacked by the agents of modern philosophy, the great body * of slaves in Jamaica had been a contented race of people, obedient to their masters, and receiving in return every comfort and protection which could lighten the chains of servitude, or mitigate the pains of ordinary labour. Reciprocal kindness, thus established, was gradually expanding, and producing the result which all desired—the exchange of the original system of slavery for the inestimable benefits of a free and well-regulated class of civilized agriculturists. But the mistaken interference of an enthusiastic or interested faction had now inflamed the passions of the slaves, as well as those of the British public, and fanned the embers of slumbering rebellion :—mutual confidence gave way to general suspicion, and every sincere effort of the colonists to adopt the suggestions of genuine philanthropy, was paralyzed by the intemperance of the party opposed to them. It was

* No revolt, however calamitous, or annoying, had ever been actively supported by five hundred men,—a very inconsiderable number in proportion to the whole population.

in vain, under such circumstances as these, that the Duke of Manchester, who had so recently witnessed the public feeling throughout Great Britain, should urge the expediency of satisfying its clamour, however unreasonable, by granting further privileges to a people who already felt not the weight of the light chains which bound them, and which were, in fact, merely nominal. It was in vain that he cited the example of all the civilized world, where there existed a desire (how ineffectual!) to improve the condition of the lower classes of society. An unimpassioned and deliberate revision of all the laws affecting slavery, served only to confirm the inhabitants of Jamaica in an opinion that they were as mild and complete as the nature of the institution would admit, and amply sufficient to render the slave population as comfortable in every respect as are the labouring classes in any part of the world. Although conducted with the impartiality of strict justice, the moment was certainly unfavourable to such discussions: for the proceedings of the British parliament had already inspired the negroes with a belief that the people of England had actually declared them free; and thus, from a state of peace and content, their minds became inflamed with dangerous ideas of a latitude of personal liberty which they neither understood, nor were capable of enjoying. A.D. 1823.

Harassed and perplexed as the people of the island were, they yet refused to join in the colonial crusade which was preached by the Dominica Senate,

and whose object it was to enable the West Indies to withstand the attacks of parliament, or to denounce the blind fanaticism of their enemies. It was proposed to unite their general strength against the parent state by openly opposing the acts of oppression which had been exercised or threatened; and had such a measure been seriously adopted by the superior influence of Jamaica, England might not now have had to boast of the richest colonies possessed by any state in Europe—for some of them might have already fallen into the hands of a rival, though a kindred, power. But the loyal attachment of this colony to the British throne, which has been shewn in so many instances, was proof against all temptation; and a more virtuous policy urged the inhabitants to adopt the means of convincing at least the impartial portion of the nation, that every effort was actually making to perfect that melioration in the condition of their slaves which had been, for twenty years, in successful operation, and which might prepare them for a boon that ill-judged enthusiasm would deprive them of for ever.—"If slavery, however, be an offence against the just decrees of Heaven" (it was thus that the people of Jamaica addressed their Sovereign), "let your royal parliament, which originally cursed our land with it, become the lawful owners of our properties by purchase; and we will instantly retire from the island, to leave it a free field for modern philanthropy to work upon. The Deity, who knows the secrets of our hearts, is

to be propitiated by the sacrifice of that only which is our own to offer."

On all sides the colonists were open to the snares of an enemy less brave, but more artful than themselves. The distress and oppression which might be met with in every parish workhouse in England, or the wild state of wretched Ireland, far more disgraceful to humanity than anything to be met with here, offered to real benevolence a domestic, and therefore a much more interesting field for a display of its virtuous exertions. But the machinations of a powerful faction, long active in the work of colonial destruction, had now obtained the sanction of ministerial authority, and the threatened preliminary decree was issued from the Royal Parliament, which destined Jamaica for a propitiatory sacrifice on the altar of fanaticism*.

Another attempt was, at the same time, made to bereave the colony of one of its ancient privileges, by requiring that a sum of money should be annually paid into the military chest, instead of permitting the people to retain the right of employing their own funds by furnishing in kind the articles necessary for its garrison, or even of providing money for specific purposes. It appeared to have been the intention of government, had this extraordinary proposition been entertained, to make such additions to the most eligible island barracks as would have enabled the troops to abandon the

* See Note LIII.

unhealthy quarters of Up-Park camp; and at the same time to put the garrison upon an equal footing with those of the Windward Islands*. But the country declared its conviction that it was utterly impossible to satisfy the colonial minister in the provision of barracks, as experience had invariably proved that every new commander of the forces was governed by different considerations, too often by personal convenience or caprice, in choosing his favourite military stations, always at the expense of the island, generally at that of his soldiers' lives. The decision of the Assembly proved that it valued less a relief from the trouble of entering into the detail of military expenditure, than its duty to the country, which could never endure that its representatives, to suit their personal convenience, should relinquish their ancient control over any portion of the public funds. It was then attempted to impose on the ruined resources of the colony an accumulating provision of those allowances for the absent, which were intended only for the resident defenders of its shores. The application, reiterated for several successive years, was firmly withstood even to the importunity of a favourite Governor†; and the historian, wearied by the frequent recurrence of such acts of avidity, hastens to dismiss a subject, whose detail he finds he can no longer vary.

With more temper than could have been expected from a body of men thus oppressed, the colonial

* See Note LIV. † Votes of Assembly, 1825, p. 31.

Senate once again proceeded, with care and caution, to revise the laws, to lighten the last remaining links of the servile chain, and to remove, from the condition of the coloured classes, every pretence of unnecessary disability. That portion of the population began to feel its overwhelming power, and, though far less wise than wealthy, it plainly perceived the influence which it must shortly obtain in an island which, in the next generation, will surely be their own. The discouragement of marriage, and the degeneracy of the white inhabitants, has already bequeathed some of the largest properties to coloured children; the evil, if such it be, is hourly increasing; and the historian feels that the page which he is now inditing will be far less useful or interesting to its present readers than it may hereafter be to them. It was, however, a failure of their usual prudence which led them to anticipate their rising fortunes, and to demand admission to the privileges of freehold suffrages; or, while the blood of pagan Africa still flowed thick and darkly in their veins, to affect to consider it an unnecessary degradation to be obliged to produce evidence of their conversion to Christianity*, before they were permitted to bind themselves by a Christian oath.

The island was become the scene of conspiracy and rebellion; every class was reasonably looked upon with suspicion and mistrust; and a disaffected few considered it a favourable opportunity to force

* See Note LV.

these embarrassing claims upon the distracted attention of the legislature, which discreetly and liberally granted, to such as maintained a character that merited distinction, the special privileges which they asked; but their unlimited admission to the exercise of political power was firmly and prudently withstood.

A case of unparalleled atrocity drew the public attention to a subject much at variance with that which had lately engaged it, and whose investigation has been the fertile subject of bitter calumny, promoted by one distant and prejudiced individual, who has blindly espoused the cause of murder and rebellion, against the great body of colonial eye-witnesses, who were themselves the objects of destruction. I will not repeat, because I do not firmly believe, that the Chief Justice of Jamaica was influenced by those corrupt motives which have been attributed to him, to release, in the exercise of his official power, two French prisoners who had been confined for an attempt to revolutionise the island, and who were impatient to sheathe their daggers in the breasts of its white inhabitants. Yet when a Judge descends to the narrow and peevish character of a factious disputant, he is easily provoked to supply the defect of argument, or even the integrity of reputation, by the plenitude of that authority with which his gown has clothed him; and though the voice of Fame may not be trusted, unless our assent be extorted by the internal evidence of facts,

the faith of history cannot conceal that, before a Committee of the Legislature, the conduct of the Chief Justice was investigated, and the question seriously agitated whether it should not be made the subject of a formal impeachment. The forbearance which ever marked the character and government of the Duke of Manchester was satisfied with the removal of the two alien offenders; and the colonial alien law gave the necessary power. A multitude of witnesses pressed forward to prove, not only that they were natives of Hayti, and persons of the most infamous character, but that the conspiracy, in which they were deeply engaged, if not its original projectors, was of such a nature that the most speedy removal of them could alone preserve the island. Instead, therefore, of instituting a legal, probably a tedious, process, but one which would ultimately have consigned them to the gallows, the humane Governor adopted the urgent recommendation of the Legislature, and, by the timely exercise of the power with which he was vested, he once more saved the colony. The extravagant assertion of the two convicted conspirators, that they were *not* aliens, may be dismissed with silent contempt; for the only suspicion of such a case, or of their innocence, arose from the vehemence of their own protestations, and the sublime purity which they ascribed to their own virtues. Neither am I disposed to prolong or repeat the detail of succeeding events, which inflicted a wound that is still bleeding. It would not be an easy task

to blend all the circumstances of the transaction in one distinct view, or even to reconcile every account of it: yet I may secure, at least, the impartiality of the short narrative, by borrowing from each party the facts which redound to its own disgrace, and the honour of its foes.

Volumes were written, and perhaps never read, containing every information which the Governor could offer to the Colonial Office; but after brushing away all highly coloured, and doubtful circumstances, it appears that the French miscreants were principally encouraged in their subsequent conduct by the difference of opinion which their case had given rise to, between the magistracy of the island and its Chief Judge; and aware that the voracious appetite of the anti-colonists would eagerly swallow any bait, they went to London, pregnant with mischief to Jamaica. With what facility evidence to any effect may be there procured, is disgracefully notorious to all who have visited the courts of Westminster Hall; yet it was on the bare assertion of these convicted felons, that they were natives of the British dominions, that a petition to the House of Commons was founded, and the dignity of that august body insulted, by a complaint of treatment which was the only alternative to their being hanged. Bigotry and partiality are powerful magnifiers of every object of dispute, or there would not have been found a member of that House, high in reputation, and learned in the law, who would so far have betrayed the acri-

mony and impatience of his anti-colonial zeal as to give credit or effect to this flagitious petition, by attaching importance to the palpable falsehoods which these artful foreigners attempted to impose. One, however, there was who eagerly embraced the disgraceful office of their advocate; and on such faith as could be placed in the assertions of detected rebels, or foreign conspirators, (one they must be,) attempted to affix a foul stigma on the entire magistracy of Jamaica. When it was discovered that his claim to credit could no longer be supported on such hollow ground, an expedient suggested itself, which might perhaps have answered his purpose, by obtaining from the Assembly of the nation (can such a proposition be credited?) a sum of money to purchase the future absence of the culprits from Jamaica; or perhaps to pay the expenses of their unsuccessful suit,—a mode of proceeding, not less subversive of the true ends of justice, than of the *dignity* of the British parliament. At the distance of four years, will it be believed that these wretches are still cherished as food for the acrimony of Jamaica's and of England's enemies; and that when a change of ministers had frustrated their dark intrigues, an attempt was made by their advocate to corrupt the source of justice by the partial, surreptitious publication of a despicable libel, baited with popular falsehoods, and assuming the attractive appearance of "*The Yellow Book?*"—This, too, after a formal and expensive commission had been sent to

Jamaica to inquire into the facts upon the spot; and which had distinctly borne testimony to the correct procedure of the Duke of Manchester, in the consideration of three separate heads:—1. The question of the Frenchmen's birth; 2. The charge of sedition; 3. The conduct of the Chief Justice. That no information might be wanting at the Colonial Office, an active and intelligent magistrate of Kingston endured the fatigue and expenses of a voyage, to impart the intimate knowledge which he had acquired of the whole transaction. The exertions of Mr. Mitchel deserve the gratitude of his fellow-colonists; but they proved only that the incurable madness of a political faction disdains alike to balance the weight of evidence, or to measure the degrees of guilt.

I have thus hastily reviewed, and gladly dismiss, a subject which it is painful to dwell upon; but the colouring of the picture will be heightened by the depth of the background: for while these cherished criminals were the objects of compassion amongst a misguided few in England, the dreadful effects of their crime were everywhere apparent in Jamaica. The ripening fruits of their dark conspiracy were breaking forth in every quarter; and the storm, which had been delayed by their seasonable absence, soon burst upon the island with a violence which confounded the skill and courage of the stoutest beholder. For many months the scene of their machinations had been enlivened

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by the frequent and nocturnal meetings of the corrupted slaves; and Jean Baptiste Corberand, a worthy disciple of their revolutionary doctrines, was seized in the act of organising a simultaneous massacre of the white population throughout the eastern districts of Portland and Saint George. In the Northern parish of Saint Mary, a slave divulged the horrid plot, and saved the inhabitants by a timely act of penitence; but in the distant regions of the west, an active rebellion broke out amongst the negroes of five estates, who, in a body of nearly twelve hundred, had conspired to set fire to the buildings, and destroy their masters as they appeared to quench the flames.

A critic will always distrust the extraordinary praises of a successful general, so difficult for valour to obtain, so easy for flattery to invent:—nor was the strength of a military force now so necessary as its activity; yet the most impartial severity will not deny that to the exertions of the commander of the forces was the country in this instance indebted for its preservation: for his presence was almost simultaneous at the different points of danger or suspicion, and he checked the spirit of rebellion, even before it had time to shew itself. Trained in the exercise of arms, Sir John Keane had earned his fame during the laborious service of the British army in the Peninsula of Spain, and one of the most singular features of his character was the contrast and vicissitude of energy and inactivity, of hardiness and effeminacy.

In the camp, he seemed ignorant of peace; in the drawing-room, he appeared incapable of war. Yet his regard for the meanest soldier was ever shewn in his own conduct, for the duty he imposed on his men he inflicted on himself; and while every act was measured by the inflexible rules of discipline, his troops were taught to repose implicit confidence in their own valour, and in the wisdom of their General, without despising even the barbarian force to which it might be necessary to oppose them here. On one occasion alone his fortune betrayed the glory which he had acquired in so many hard fought battles; and the failure of the attack on New Orleans might have stripped him of some laurels, had it not been proved beyond a doubt that it was to be attributed to those who planned, not to those who executed, the unfortunate expedition. His conduct there evinced that knowledge of the art of war which can be attained only by experience; and I may be permitted to borrow the words of an eye-witness, that "Sir John Keane deserves as much credit for his unhesitating obedience, as he has justly acquired by his skilful command*."

The negroes, though excited to the highest pitch of expectation and revolt, were surprised by the celerity, and subdued by the appearance of the indefatigable General. The ignorant savages, whose minds are peculiarly susceptible of any impressions which have a tendency to shed human blood, had

* Letter of the gallant Colonel Smith to "the Subaltern."

been influenced by the arts of an infamous crew of incendiaries, of which the transported aliens were the head, to believe that the British parliament had actually decreed their liberty, and that their masters alone stood between them and that state of freedom, which, had it been calmly offered to them, many would have positively refused*. Nor was this idea confined to a few properties, or even districts of the island, but pervaded it throughout; and it has taken such firm hold upon the negro mind, where it is fostered by the artful doctrines of the sectarians, who cloud their addresses with a perpetual abuse of Scripture, that it is found the constant theme of their conversation; while its effects are everywhere visible in the altered demeanour, the apparent mystery, and the insolent reluctance with which they now discharge their ordinary duties.

The discussions which, from time to time, are renewed in the House of Commons, and with which they are immediately made acquainted, tend to keep alive the feelings of distrust and dissatisfaction; and have placed a barrier of insurmountable hostility between the master and his slave, while they defeat the very object which the advocates of immediate emancipation have in view. Instead of diffusing a pure and salutary light, which might gradually prepare the negro mind for that improvement which is contemplated, these repeated attacks upon their

* A note in the Appendix to the first volume of these Annals, (p. 467,) refers to this identical case.

mental faculties have encouraged notions not less inimical to their own happiness than to the existence of the colony, and have kindled a flame which, if it ever be extinguished, it will be in blood alone*.

The loss of property, with the expenses incurred by the island during the agitated period of the last rebellion, amounted to more than fifteen thousand pounds; and the British government, which had so thoughtlessly occasioned it, was called upon for remuneration, with how much success the reader of these pages will easily imagine. Upon the feeling which was thus produced, the simple recommendation of the colonial minister, that the slave population should receive additional liberty, could not be expected to have the effect desired. But a mine was now prepared of deep and dangerous artifice, and the experimental Order in Council was issued to Trinidad, whose purport was, as time and experience have long since amply proved, to invade the rights of private property, and, at all hazards, to anticipate the term of colonial slavery ere its objects could be prepared to receive the benefit which it was intended to confer.

It was a precedent of dangerous tendency to establish that, whenever the public voice is raised, let

* I shall be pardoned for adopting the language of a Report presented to the Colonial Assembly by a highly talented member, Mr. Hugo James, the present Advocate-General of Jamaica:—an impartial witness, a philanthropist, and a scholar, whose eloquence has warmed, and whose integrity has investigated the common cause of genuine humanity.

the instruments or the artifice be ever so base, it is to be obeyed without inquiry, and without respect even for the acknowledged rights of Britons. Nor will the cautious prudence of the Parliament ever stop to ask whose property may next be sacrificed, if such encroachments on public faith are thus to be allowed. In this instance the schemes of the minister had undergone no examination before parliament—no committees had sat in anxious deliberation—no witnesses had been examined on the probable effects—no counsel had been heard: in short, not one of the safeguards provided against the invasion usually made on private property by a road, or a canal, or a dock, were thought necessary; because only the rights, and property, and lives of persons under the displeasure of the public, were herein concerned.

Compulsory manumission was one of the first and most injurious effects of this extraordinary decree,—injurious alike to the real interests of the slaves generally, and to the properties of their owners. One example will suffice. The historian is in the habit of seeing every day *a slave* who has slaves waiting upon him, horses and grooms at his command; whose table displays every luxury of the climate, and whose clothes are fashioned, and annually sent to him, by a London tailor. Yet his master could not spare his services to make him free: he was a valuable slave, and, wishing on his death-bed to reward him, he thus left him the com-

mand of wealth and the means of acquiring it, which, as a free man, he would probably have abused, or never enjoyed.

The Order in Council was, however, constitutionally offered for *the acceptance* of the island of Jamaica: yet it was at the same time clearly intimated what would be the consequence of refusal; and obedience was expected from the subservient senate. But to be derived from a source of equity and justice, it is the most indispensable condition that the laws should be framed by those whose obedience they require, or for whose benefit they are designed; and so keenly was the insult felt by the inhabitants, whose lives had just been rescued from the machinations which had been prepared by the projectors of this measure, that, in the vexation of the moment, an attempt was made to repeal the Registry law, with which they had vainly hoped to purchase a longer truce with their inveterate foes. Nor could those who beheld the repeated acts of insidious aggression, which endangered every hour of their existence, hear, without some emotions of distrust, that it was the intention of the Sovereign to raise the island to the expensive honours of a See, and to send a prelate "to report upon the condition of the slaves."

The numerous West Indians residing in England, possessing wealth, and honour, and influence there, perceived, at length, that the machinations of their enemies were directed to the ruin of their colonial

properties, and that the doctrines of sectarianism were to be the specious means. They rightly judged, therefore, that the only hope of counteracting the influence of a popular faction might be in giving force and direction to the labours of the established clergy within the colonies; at the same time placing one there whose independence might ensure the strictest impartiality. The foremost in this, as in every effort to stem the tide of popular prejudice, and to serve his country, through the medium of its colonies, stood the indefatigable member for Surrey, Mr. Pallmer, who was intimately acquainted with Jamaica, and to whom the annalist owes this tribute, not less in justice than in gratitude. Yet although they courted every inquiry which might display their real state, the colonists had suffered too much from the crude observations, or theoretic reports of speculative visiters and artful missionaries, to feel perfectly secure in the information of one who would probably be yet reeking with the habits and prejudices of a college cloister, who might report hastily; and who would certainly be selected by those who had proved themselves the inveterate enemies to their lives and fortunes. The anxious eyes of all were, therefore, turned to the person who might be chosen to fill the sacred office of their Bishop.

While these important measures occupied attention, the Assembly was labouring to remove such grievances as were more immediately within its reach; and few seemed more injurious to the interests of the

island, in the increasing distresses of its agriculture and commerce, than the exorbitant fees still exacted by the officers of the customs. In their anxiety to relieve the oppressed, the Assembly, however, inflicted an evil greater than that which they had attempted to remove; or at least, it appeared that an active and meritorious body of men was seriously injured by reducing their aggregate incomes below their actual need. Succeeding regulations, issuing from the Treasury itself, have, perhaps, proved that it was not so; but influenced by the feelings of compassion, or probably to prevent any possible encroachment on the patronage of the Crown, the Governor risked his popularity by the unexpected refusal of his sanction to the law, after it had passed the other branches,—thus taking upon himself the odium of an unpopular measure, which ought to have been assumed by the guardianship of the Council. It was a principle which seems to have governed the conduct of the Duke of Manchester to place himself always in that responsible situation which might prevent the consequences of any disagreement between the inferior authorities of the island, and which, in the present instance, would have intercepted the supplies that its exigencies so much required.

His prudence once more restored peace and harmony to his government; and though its prosperity was fled for ever, a decision of the Imperial parliament enabled him, in the following year, to announce the opening of the ports to

A.D. 1825.

ships of foreign nations. The duties were also a little lowered, so as to afford encouragement to some, and relief to other articles of produce, besides those which were considered the staples of the colony. He announced, likewise, the presence of the first Bishop of Jamaica, Doctor Christopher Lipscomb *, a man whose character as a clergyman, and as a scholar, gave a fair promise of a strict and impartial exercise of his sacred functions. He had been received with all the honours which could adorn and disguise the triumph of temporal, or even spiritual, vanity. Addresses, of the most humble and encouraging description, poured in upon him from every parish in the island; he replied to them with dignity and skill; and receiving thus the most unlimited homage, he confidently recommended the adoption of every measure which he thought might improve the spiritual condition of the slave population. He urged, at the same time, such legislative enactments as would render effectual the object of his mission; and he took his seat on the right hand of the President of the Council, under circumstances which promised every success to a prelate who should conduct himself with prudence and moderation.

The most important enactment which, it was ignorantly contended, could raise the negro from his

* By a singular coincidence the names of the first Discoverer, the first and the last Spanish Governor, and the first Protestant Bishop of Jamaica, were all attached to the unusual appellation of Christopher.

natural state of slavery, was that which might render effective the evidence of those who had been barely sprinkled with the waters of baptism, against their masters and each other. The spirit of such a law was inadmissible in any court of justice, where it was allowed that the mere outward sign of regeneration could not inspire the inward obligation of a Christian oath; but it was contended that the practical enactment could do no injury while British judges and enlightened juries stood between the accuser and accused. Without regarding its tendency to multiply, beyond all calculation, the crime of perjury, the law was introduced by one of the most amiable and enlightened men who ever did honour to the silken gown; and Mr. Renalls, the Judge of the Vice-Admiralty, might reasonably congratulate himself upon his convincing eloquence in behalf of the measure he proposed. But the influence of the Crown was not, at that moment, as great as in the torturing instance of the Registry Bill; and the law of servile evidence was, for that time, lost. Similar was the fate which attended a Bill that passed the Assembly placing unlimited power in the hands of the Bishop of Jamaica. A clause which would have defined the duties attached to the office of Churchwarden, administered the usual oath for the due performance of his duties, and manifested to an ignorant multitude the union between the church and state, was evaded by the personal interests or scruples of the members, many of whom professed the

principles of the Kirk; while those which affected the rights and persons of the clergy were passed with little consideration, and the act went to the Council with several provisions curtailing even the power and patronage of the crown. As its vigilant guardians, the members of that board amended and finally rejected it. A short adjournment was necessary to restore that harmony which the interests of the church had so unseasonably interrupted. The law was revived: some of the offensive clauses were softened, or expunged, and it passed for the limited period of five years; but in a shape which entails a burden on the country*, and leaves the church of Jamaica an anomaly amidst the Protestant establishments of the empire.

Of the clergy, submission is the first duty, and patience the most useful virtue; but the abuses of religion cannot be corrected by the discipline of law. I shall leave to a succeeding annalist the ungrateful task of recording the effect which these ecclesiastical novelties have had upon the state of society and the Colonial church, and content myself with observing that, within twelve months after its first Bishop had been vested with the extraordinary power he so industriously sought, an unfortunate curate was obliged to appeal for justice to the common law of his country; and the verdict of a jury was suspended *only* by the startling discovery that the new dignitary was no longer subject to it.

* See Note LVI.

Let us now survey the catastrophe of this busy plot, and the final situation of the colony. A.D. 1826. It was decreed that the sinners of Jamaica should drain the last dregs of the cup of penance for having rejected the Evidence law, and become possessors of a species of property which it was England's crime to have forced upon them; and they now trembled on the brink of an abyss which had been treacherously dug beneath their feet. The Duke of Manchester found himself unequal to the support of a sinking colony; or, perhaps, it formed part of the scheme organised for its destruction to withdraw him from a government which, for nearly twenty years, had been the scene of his active and successful exertions. The intelligence was received with the utmost consternation, and it might be the lingering hope of still retaining him which operated so powerfully in subduing prejudices, and promoting a measure which he urged at the command of the British government. In his last session, the Slave Evidence Bill was revived with every provision which ministers could reasonably ask, or the island safely concede: but the councils of the Assembly were discordant, their motions slow and doubtful, and their progress was checked by the universal clamour of the country, by negotiation and intrigue. The Governor perceived its probable failure; and, with consummate dexterity, he withheld or softened many of the obnoxious measures with which he was charged. Instead of threats, he made use of the

gentle means of seduction: wealth, dignity, and power were the liberal rewards of apostacy from the principles of the former House, which had been dissolved. The law, which gave all but freedom to the slave, was passed by a considerable majority. It was acted upon, if not with much benefit, at least without any mischief, during the space of nearly twelve months, when the expectations of the slaves and the hopes of the colonists were again blasted by the tardy information that it had been rejected by the Royal Council, *because* the sectarians had been restricted in their nocturnal meetings, and a stop was put to their system of robbery under the name of contributions, extorted from the weak minds and shallow pockets of the slaves * by the most fearful denunciations of God's wrath.

Perhaps a more ungracious measure has never emanated from the Royal Council than the sudden and unexpected allowance of this important law—important *not* only as it regarded the substantial improvement of the slaves, but still more so as it had subdued the deep-rooted objections which had so long been opposed to some of its provisions. These objections had been overcome by the consummate dexterity of the Duke of Manchester's administration; particularly that most obstinate prejudice which had hitherto withstood the admission of slave evidence, and which had been conquered only by the most judicious management. When it is consi-

* See Note LVII.

dered that this act had received, in the King's name, the royal approbation of the good feeling it manifested, and the substantial benefits it conferred, without entering into a minute detail of its separate clauses; and when it was known only as one of experiment, confined to a trial of five years, it might have been expected that the prudence of the British cabinet would have hesitated before it touched a fabric raised with so much difficulty, and containing so much real and intrinsic good; that the overwhelming interests of sectarianism might, in short, have been satisfied with some less precipitate and offensive mode of conveying the partial dissatisfaction of the King's ministers at a few insulated clauses in a most important law. Instead of such a line of conduct as would have marked the caution of a careful minister who was really interested in the welfare of the slaves, Mr. Huskisson, upon assuming the Colonial Department, and before it was possible that he could have made himself master of the subject, even with all the undivided industry which he could apply, put his name to a despatch, evidently the result of infinite thought and labour, and sent it to the Lieut.-Governor of Jamaica, at a period when, had the Assembly been so disposed, it could not have resumed the consideration of the rejected law. Although Mr. Huskisson cannot be acquitted of a certain portion of censure for allowing his name to appear to this extraordinary despatch, it can never be regarded as his own composition.

There is a tone of hostile feeling pervading the whole of it; praise, wherever it is bestowed, is always coupled with regret at something left undone; and the motives of the act are so perversely misconstrued, so wilfully perverted, that it betrays throughout the hand of some agent of sectarianism, or hostility to the colonies, and not that of an enlightened and intelligent minister, who, it had been fondly hoped, would have acted from the dictates of his own skill and judgment. Nor were the inhabitants of Jamaica less disappointed in their expectations that the Colonial Department would at length be released from those fetters which "the saints' seemed to have imposed on the minds of Mr. Huskisson's predecessors in his office.

Of the impolicy of any sudden interruption given to a law which has once been in operation, there can be little doubt; but when such an interference takes place in regard to a law totally new in its principle, and which changes the condition of an entire population in the most essential points, the consequences cannot but be highly injurious, perhaps fatal. In the present instance, it has weakened the confidence of the slave in those benefits which have been held out to him,—taught him to consider them as delusive and insecure,—embarrassed the whole machine of government, and defeated the ends of justice in two most extraordinary cases. The act came into operation on the 1st of May, 1827: a person was tried at the ensuing November assizes

for murder, and the evidence of slaves, admitted in his trial, contributed to his conviction. Perhaps a more atrocious case of murder has not occurred within the last century, or one which more loudly called for punishment. But the hand of justice was arrested by the arrival of Mr. Huskisson's letter, which was dated in September, and the Attorney-General, deeming this letter in itself, and without the Order in Council which it promised, an actual promulgation of the Royal will, the Lieut.-Governor was advised by the crown officer to delay the execution of the sentence until the King's further pleasure should be known. The question appeared to be, *when* did the last slave law cease to operate, and *when* did that of the year 1816 (which the last act had repealed) come again into operation—whether simultaneously with the Order in Council, or when that order was *received* by the Lieut.-Governor of Jamaica? If the law of 1826 remained in force until the order disallowing it was actually received, then the conviction of the murderer, at the November assizes, was legal. If, however, the law ceased to operate on the 16th of October, the date of the Order in Council, then he was tried under the provisions of a law which ceased to be in force, and of course his conviction cannot be sustained.

There is another case of equal atrocity which hangs on this important question. Two negro slaves murdered their white employer in the month

of October, 1827; and they were tried (after the arrival of the Order in Council) under the law of 1816. But as the offence was committed before the receipt of that order, if the opinion generally entertained, though it did not obtain the support of the Attorney-General, that the last law remained in force until the order disallowing it was received on the 23d of December, be correct, then the conviction of these slaves must be illegal, as they were tried under the law of the year 1816, which the last act had repealed.

These atrocious cases, which have thrown the whole colony into confusion, and induced consequences which it may be hoped that the ministers of the crown will profit by, are still in suspense; and whatever may be the decision of the law authorities in England, one of them must remain unpunished. The Attorney-General of Jamaica felt, indeed, so much diffidence in his own opinion upon this unexampled proceeding, that he very prudently advised the magistracy of the island to discharge by proclamation all slaves remaining untried for offences committed since the 1st of May, 1827, when the last act came into operation.

The Assembly was, in the mean time, urged once more to renew the law, with many important and dangerous additions suggested by the new colonial minister: but it expressed, with force and freedom, the grievances which, on every side, oppressed the ruined province, resolutely re- A.D. 1827.

fused to advance another step, and fortified itself behind the firm or feeble barrier of constitutional justice and the faith of nations.

I hasten to conclude, but must not omit an instance of tardy solicitude which the Assembly evinced for the lives of the people. It had been repeatedly attempted, with more zeal than success, to reform two of the learned professions, while the abuses of the third were attaining a monstrous and pernicious growth; and though the professors of medicine might have been more effectually weeded by the examining masters of the schools, the multitude of lives which have here been sacrificed to personal interest and the blindest ignorance, called long since for the strong hand of legislative interference.

The young aspirants of medical fame, or rather practice, have been usually consigned to the distant freedom of the Edinburgh academy, and, perhaps, if they escaped the terrors of the Holyrood, they were permitted to lounge away a few weeks in the schools or streets of Paris. With a nominal diploma, or, much more frequently, with none at all, they were then turned loose upon their bilious victims in either Indies, with the proud title of *Physician*, which there swallows up every other branch of the healing art. The representatives of the numerous absentees were influenced by various motives, of which flattery was not the least*, to divide a practice which might

* I have at this moment before me a recent *Tentamen Medicum*, consisting of twenty pages of bad Latin, with four of distinct

maintain one respectable individual amongst an herd of these plebeian *doctors*, who gained but a scanty and discreditable subsistence from the practice of their pernicious art. An affectation of learning, and an authoritative tone, passed current amongst their usual associates, and thousands of lives were daily sacrificed to their incorrigible ignorance under the common and convenient veil of tropical disease. The Assembly at length noticed the abuse, and instituted a school of medicine, under the management of some of the most skilful members of the profession, and for the purpose of examining all candidates for practice before they were let loose upon a credulous public. But the second branch of the legislature, for reasons which lie hid in the recesses of its council chamber, refused its assent—the bill was lost, imposition triumphed, and the people died.

The Duke, in the mean time, had left the island, and Sir John Keane ascended the chair of the executive with the vicarious title which he long had held. He possessed, and perhaps surpassed, the ordinary virtues of a soldier, and he readily adopted the forms and maxims of a military government, resigning himself to the pleasures of a life of ease: for though he strictly performed the duties which

and doggrel dedications, to four individuals, not one of whom can probably comprehend more than his own name in the fawning, fulsome compliment: but they have the command of practice.

were defined, his interest could neither be excited, nor of much avail, in a colony of whose concerns he knew but little, and could expect to govern for so short a time. Though his moderation has not escaped the reproach of indolence, his mind was vigorous, and his prudence successful. He minutely inspected the militia, published a new code of regulations, and, in the Court of Chancery, eminently distinguished himself by the clear and rapid equity of his decrees. In the exercise of public justice he ever proved himself firm and impartial; and in his palace he surpassed the gay hospitality of all his predecessors. The voluptuous splendour of his entertainments dazzled the eyes of the multitude; every eye and every tongue affected to express the sense of the general happiness, and the veil of ceremony, or dissimulation, was drawn over the general regret at the absence of the Duke of Manchester. But the fabric of the ancient government had now been broken, and deep was the sigh of the reflecting few who revolved in their anxious minds the past history and the probable fate of a colony, which, if we annihilate the interval of time, could hardly be recognised for that of an happy age ere it was blighted by the fiscal avidity, or chastised by the severe hand of an unnatural parent. Amidst hope and fear, the fears of the wise and the hopes of the credulous, the season of reform had rolled away; the calamities of the times had wasted the

numbers* and substance of the people; the most fertile lands were left without cultivation or inhabitants; and the island remained but a shadow and sepulchre of its former self.

The streams of blood which flow down the pages of history through the first fifteen years of the present century, are now stopped, and the world once more enjoys calm repose. But peace and justice have been long since banished from Jamaica: all her institutions are withered, and her ruin has been accelerated by storms and earthquakes. The trunk is at length bent to the ground, and although the hurricane has passed away, it can rise no more,—its vegetation and its life have fled.

* See Note LIII.

## Concluding Chapter.

### THE ORIGINAL STATE OF THE NEGROES IN THEIR NATIVE LAND.

It cannot be considered foreign to the purposes of this history, to introduce some notice of the original condition of the extraordinary people, whose vices have stained its pages with so many crimes, and whose appearance has attracted the wonder of mankind. I should probably disappoint the expectation of the reader were I to omit it; yet it would far exceed my limits or ability to describe the peculiar habits of so strange and barbarous a people. In a single, if possible, in a short chapter, I shall therefore endeavour to sketch a general outline of the various nations or tribes which administered to the slave-trade, and by which we are here surrounded.

In every age, the various regions of Africa appear to have been inhabited by vagrant tribes, whose indolence refused to cultivate the soil, and whose restless spirit disdained the confinement of a *sedentary* life. The uniform stability of their manners is the natural consequence of the imperfection of their faculties. Reduced to a similar situation, their wants, their desires, their engagements, still continue the same; and the influence of food or climate, which, in an improved state of society, is suspended.

or subdued by such a variety of moral causes, most powerfully contributes to form and to maintain the common character of these monstrous barbarians. The operation of instinct is more sure and simple than that of reason: it is much easier, for instance, to ascertain the appetites of a quadruped than the speculations of a philosopher—the qualifications of a negro than the accomplishments of a scholar—and the savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of animals, preserve a stronger resemblance to each other: otherwise we might be surprised at the uniformity of character which pervades all the African tribes with which we are familiar in Jamaica: for the picture of one contains the outline of them all. Though brought from an extent of coast reaching fifteen hundred miles on each side of the equator, the only shade of difference seems to be that which contracts the narrow intellect by a regular though scarcely perceptible scale, through the darkest hue of Ethiopia, from the serviceable tawny Moor*, who, from the northern extremity of his land, may see the shores of Europe, to the stupid, squalid, nut-brown Hottentot of the southern Cape.

* The Moors, although black to the eyes of a common observer, are much less so than the negroes; and there is not an ancient family in Portugal which possesses the light hair and blue eye of an unmixed European. There can be no doubt that the Portuguese, the Spaniards, and the Neapolitans, are still highly tinged with negro blood; and that the Pyrenees and Alps alone are the real boundaries of colour.

Our modern acquaintance with all the intermediate tribes is so confined and imperfect, that it can supply no idea of their native and original condition, unconnected with the intercourse which the slave-trade introduced, and which corrupted all their institutions; nor do the narratives of those who have attempted to describe them, offer anything but a confused mass of highly improbable, and even contradictory matter. One observation, however, they all agree in—that the African hordes resemble each other in their barbarous lives; that they all practise the same means of subsistence, and employ the same arms of destruction; while all that is monstrous, vile, and contemptible, is universally found amongst those savages, whose native cowardice can be stimulated only by the consciousness of numbers. Their houses are the rudest hovels, affording an imperfect and dirty shelter from the intolerable heats and rains of a tropical summer; their garments are the most loathsome skins. They scarify their faces or mutilate their bodies; in speech they are quick, in action slow, in treaty perfidious; and they share the common reproach of barbarians, too ignorant to conceive the importance of truth, and too proud to deny or palliate the breach of the most solemn engagements. Their simplicity has lately been praised by their ignorant or interested advocates in England; yet they abstain only from what they have never known: whatever they see, they covet; their desires are insatiate, and their sole industry is the

hand of violence and rapine. The father sells his child into perpetual slavery, the child his father*; and they habitually steal one another, or dispose of their own persons, to gratify their immediate wants. From their earliest infancy they are exercised in the destruction of each other; and if we fill up the outline of the general picture, we must stain it with a view of the horrid rites of cannibalism. In the use of the bow their arm is strong, their aim sure, and the weighty arrow is directed with irresistible force; but in the ranks of battle they can be driven forwards only by the pressure of succeeding crowds. In ambush alone they are sly and formidable. Mercy they are taught by experience seldom to ask, and it is more rarely bestowed: both sexes are equally inaccessible to pity, and their appetite for raw flesh countenances a false impression that all are equally depraved by an unnatural longing for human food. Like the animals of prey which range their native forests, the savages both of the Old and New worlds experience the vicissitudes of famine and plenty; and the stomach is inured to sustain, without much inconvenience, the opposite

* An extraordinary instance of this fact is recorded by Le Maire, in his Voyage (p. 82. edit. Paris, 1695.) The reader will be rather confused than edified by the voyages of Broeck, 1606; Jobson, 1621; Stibbs, 1724; Moore, 1733; or the adventures of Job Ben Salomon, 1731; all of which may be found, with admirable comments, in the 4th vol. of the Hist. Gén. des Voyages. See also the Voyages of Villault, 1667; that of Phillips, 1694; Loyer, 1701; Atkins, 1721; the Chevalier des Marchais, 1725; Smith, 1727; and Snelgrave, 1719.

extremes of hunger and intemperance. Their supply of food is prolonged and multiplied by their undistinguishing appetite and patient abstinence; but the latter, which a Stoic might approve and an hermit envy, is constantly succeeded by the most voracious indulgence of the former; and they indifferently feed on the flesh of those animals which have been killed for their use, or have died of disease. Some of the more fortunate savages are plentifully nourished by the liberality of nature; but the common association of carnivorous, and cruel, is strongly exemplified in their contrast with such as inhabit an ungrateful soil. Let the skilful practitioners of the medical art determine, if they can, how far the temper of the human mind may be governed by the use of animal or vegetable food; but, though *we* may not be inclined to subscribe to the truth of Rousseau's opinion*, we shall be compelled to allow that the sight of domestic cruelty must have a powerful influence upon the morals of a people. The sentiment of compassion must be weakened by beholding the lamb slaughtered by the same hand from which it was accustomed to receive its daily

* " Les grands mangeurs de viande sont en général cruels et féroces, plus que les autres hommes; cette observation est de tous les lieux, et de tous les temps : la barbarie Anglaise est connue. Je sais que les Anglais vantent beaucoup leur humanité, et le bon naturel de leur nation, qu'ils appellent *good natured people;* mais ils ont beau crier cela tant qu'ils peuvent, personne ne le répète après eux ;" (*Emile*, vol. i., page 335, ed. Paris, 1792)—so much for national enmity !

food; and even the charge against the Creole females, who are bred within sight of domestic slavery and the driver's whip, may be less unfounded than we would willingly allow.

The customs and manners of the native Africans seem to be perfectly suited to the measure of their narrow intellect. They live in societies, it is true—some of them in towns, which are said to be extensive; and if a life of slavish idleness imply enjoyment, they are happy. But they have no regulations dictated by foresight; their actions are the simple result of revengeful, selfish feeling, influenced by the crimes which universally prevail amongst them. Their acts are, therefore, vindictive; and death or foreign slavery is the only punishment to which their stubborn barbarity can bend. A fine or compensation for murder is familiar to the barbarians of every age; and in the neighbourhood of the European factories upon the coast of Africa, it has been lately established by the superior vices of a disgraceful commerce; but amongst the unsophisticated Africans of the interior, the kinsmen of the dead are at liberty to exercise with their own hands the strict law of retaliation. The refined malice of the negroes will sometimes refuse the head of the murderer, and substitute rather an innocent to a guilty person, transferring the penalty to the best, the most considerable of the race by whom they have been injured. Should the chosen victim fall by their own hand, they are exposed to the danger

of reprisal: the interest and the principal of the bloody debt are thus accumulated; the individuals of either party lead a life of malice and suspicion; the tribe itself becomes divided, and generations will sometimes pass away before the account of vengeance be finally closed.

The dexterity with which the negroes make use of poison to gratify their inhuman propensities, surpasses the utmost refinements of Asiatic cruelty. The drug is brought from the interior of the country, and the price of four slaves will scarcely purchase the quantity necessary to extinguish the life of an individual by this subtle mode*: yet it is concentrated in so small a compass, that the immersion in any liquor of the finger under whose nail it lies concealed, causes the immediate death of the drinker. The religion of those who have not embraced the corrupted faith of Islam consists chiefly in the care of the *fetiche*†. The word signifies a charm or enchantment; to *take a fetiche* is to take an oath, and to *make a fetiche* is to render worship. Every negro carries it about his person, and esteems it so sacred that he abhors the approach of another: although it usually consists of nothing more valuable than a feather, a stone, a piece of cloth, or a bone; and the *obeah*, with which we are so fatally familiar in Ja-

* Phillips's Voyage, 1694.

† Fetiche is the name used in Guinea; on the banks of the Senegal and Gambra, it is *Grisgris*. See the voyage of Smith in the year 1726.

maica; is no other than this doctrine of the fetiche. To these imaginary duties it is no unusual practice to sacrifice multitudes of human victims; and an Englishman once assisted in the barbarous ceremonies which gave the bodies of four hundred negroes to satisfy the appetites of the people, their blood to propitiate the fetiche, and their heads to adorn the chamber of the king*. The flesh was boiled and devoured; and on the following day nothing remained but the traces of the bloody meal, and the innumerable flies which clouded the air throughout the neighbourhood. The barbarian conquerors, who thus satisfied their revenge, applied the sculls of their victims either to adorn their state apartments by strings of them festooned around the walls, or to pave their avenues and courts†, or sometimes as drinking cups.

The portion of the continent of Africa which poured its superabundant population into the European slave market, and furnished these colonies with labourers, exposes to the waves of the Atlantic an extent of coast reaching no less than three thousand miles; and it is probable that the tropics scarcely confine all those interior provinces which sent their

* Snelgrave's History of the Conquest of the Kingdom of Juida, page 50.

† The court of the ruined Prussian fort of Fredericksbourg was thus paved by the Kabaschir negro, *John Conny*, whose castle and deeds of barbarous valour are still commemorated by certain tribes in Jamaica at the Christmas festival. (Smith's Voyage to Guinea, 1727.)

captives, slaves, or convicts, to the distant shores, where British purchasers were ready to receive them. The natives of Caffraria and Cape Verd; those who dwelt on the borders of Abyssinia and the sandy desert of Zahara; the Congo and the Foulis; the Hottentot and the Arab; have thus sometimes been chained together in the hold of a slave-ship, or met in the distant island of Jamaica; and found the conditions of servitude established there an unusual state of freedom and repose. The Gold Coast, or that part of it which lies at the bottom of the Gulf of Guinea, and, therefore, most accessible to the interior tribes, was the *Botany Bay* of the nations from afar, as well as the principal market of those barbarous hordes which sacrificed alike their captives or their offspring, to purchase the rare inventions of European art and industry. It would be an endless, probably a fruitless task to attempt to describe the habits, passions and constitutions which are to be found upon this extensive line of coast, and which yet so faintly distinguish the numerous nations from each other. Experience proves that a strange uniformity of barbarism pervades them all: and that the only difference lies in the degrees of the same base qualities which mark the negro race throughout. They are a people who have never emerged from a state of primitive infancy and natural barbarity:—whatever facilities may have been afforded them in the remote ages of the world, whatever communication they may have had with the improved nations

of the earth, the stream of civilization has been too small to pass over the thirsty sands of the desert, or to make its way effectually through the forests of the interior provinces. Heaven and earth have been opposed to the effort; and the difficulty of overcoming such obstacles has been found invincible, and is so still. The Esquimaux, and the Greenlander, would never have lived in towns, or, what is the same thing, they would never have cultivated the earth, had their portion of its surface remained in its primitive obscurity. Nor will the negroes ever become civilized as long as they live in an unhealthy wilderness of sand or wood, beneath the scorching influence of the equator, and exposed to an intensity of sun and vapour, which no human being else can bear. It is agriculture alone which leads mankind from the last degree of savage life to the first of civilized society; and as the cultivation of the earth is alike the curse of man and the source of all his arts, we may conceive that the further a people are distant from that source on which all depends, the more barbarous must they necessarily be; while it thus becomes a work of no difficulty to determine the precise rank which the various tribes of savages may be fairly deemed to occupy.

The *humanity* of the slave-trade has been defended upon a principle, that to afford the savages of Africa an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the civilized institutions of Europe, which they could never enjoy in their own land, because Europeans

cannot visit them in sufficient numbers to disseminate their knowledge, was an act of charity. That to refuse to the wretched victims of barbarity a refuge from those loathsome habits which find a ready substitute for labour in the food which their own flesh supplies, could have no other effect than to resign myriads to the unnatural appetites, the horrid sacrifices, or the indiscriminate slaughter which awaited them in their native land. I touch with reluctance, and I dispatch with haste, an argument which offends the ear of a free people, or which at best we are deprived of the means of substantiating by the lamentable fate of those travellers who might have proved the fact upon the spot. But *if*, before the European trade was opened by the avarice of one of our British queens, the slaves and prisoners were usually sacrificed to revenge, or to their divinities, or to satiate their appetites, fewer must have been the victims of such barbarity while fifty thousand were annually transported beyond its reach.

The natives of Africa who were brought to these shores were chiefly in that maturity of age which rendered their effective labour most valuable. Twenty years have now elapsed since that source of an agricultural population has been stopped ; and the angel of death has left but few of them amongst us. But we may still observe their original characters, untouched by their habitual intercourse with the Creole natives who surround them. We see the Coromantins, and in general all the tribes of Guinea, the

most ferocious, obstinate, and sullen of them all: the Minnahs, on the other hand, timid and desponding; the Mandingoes and Congoes unhealthy, well made, and without the usual disfiguring marks, yet rendered naturally incapable of bodily exertion by the uniform fertility of their native soil. The Papaws, Conchas, Whidahs, and Angolans, are the most useful slaves merely as machines of toil; but basely disposed and barbarously ignorant: the Ebboes, or Mocoes, are the most filthy, desperate and lazy; addicted to suicide, and unequal to the slightest degree of labour: those from the kingdom of Judda are better, and those from the banks of the Senegal, perhaps the best.

The country from whence they derive their origin forms, it may be thought, but a very imperfect evidence of quality, which may easily mislead; yet, during the continuance of the slave-trade, it was generally so well supported by experience, that it occasioned the most considerable varieties in the prices given by the Jamaica purchasers; and the lines are still so strongly marked that they cannot be mistaken. The kingdom of Gaboon is, indeed, an exception to all rule, for from its territories, situated at the bottom of the Gulf of Guinea, a well disposed negro was never brought. The Foulis are more easily disciplined than even their more southern neighbours; and the delicacy of their frame may, perhaps, have had some effect upon their minds; but if we look for an African who may be useful in the capacity of a domestic servant, we

must approach the Senegal, or cross, perhaps, the sands of Zahara to the country of the Moors. Not an individual of the whole race knows, however, in his own land, what native freedom means:—their slavery is there a habit; their liberty is here an accident; nor have they any passion, even in Jamaica, for a state the qualities of which, from the most remote ages, they have been so utterly unacquainted with*.

The natives of the southern confines of Zahara bear some affinity in character, and a great resemblance in complexion, to the Arab or the Moor. From these we descend gently in the shades of colour, and rapidly in the obscurity of the mind, to the darker mixtures of the Senegal. If we proceed still towards the south, we find the Foulis, who are familiar with the sands of the Great Desert, degenerating through the Ghiolofs to the jet black Mandingo of the Gambra, and exhibiting the powerful energy of climate on the children of a common parent. The hue has here reached its extreme intensity; but the chain of moral degradation is still prolonged, and descends, through the tribes of Upper Guinea, to the Grain, the Ivory, and the Gold coasts, petty *kingdoms*, possessing an uniformity of character scarcely human. In Lower Guinea, an artificial population and mixed race in-

* The doctrine of the Koran is not unfavourable to the institution of slavery; the example of its founder is,—for he enfranchised all his slaves upon his death bed. The law decreed, only, that in the sale of captives, mothers should never be separated from their children.

habits the swampy shores of Old Calebar: for the interior hordes of the Giajas, the most savage of all beneath an human form, in some remote age, are said to have poured from the inland Mountains of the Moon, ravaged and plundered every nation in their progress to the sea, and mingled with the conquered tribes from the Slave Coast to Angola, or even to Benguela, and the country of the Hottentots, a race not less powerful or savage than themselves. From these barbarians, who might have learnt the art of war from the Abyssinians, the natives of the western shores borrowed the horrid customs of human sacrifice, and learnt that refinement of luxury which distinguishes the excellence of human flesh. Cannibals of the most disgusting description, hardened in idolatry, and wallowing in blood, the character of these people is still unchanged.

With this imperfect picture, which represents human nature in her most disgusting form, we might reasonably be contented, did not the endeavours which we are here making to persuade the fierce barbarians, by the voice of reason and religion, to acknowledge Jesus for their God, lead our curiosity to inquire what might have been the origin of their peculiar race, and whether they have ever before possessed the means of acquiring that religion and those arts which have raised the savages of Europe to their present state of knowledge and refinement.

The age of the negro race ascends beyond all reach and record; and with respect to the cause

of its colour, information has been so little extended by our boasted improvements in the physiological arts, that it remains buried in mysterious obscurity, from which it would violate history to attempt to rescue it. It may, however, be observed, that the true negro is found in no quarter of the globe where the heat of the climate is not excessive, nor in all parts where it is. They naturally exist nowhere but within the torrid zone: in Senegal, in Guinea, throughout the western shores of Africa, in Nubia, and in the Papous land. In Nubia the natives have ever continued purely black as the negroes of the Gambra, with thick lips, flat noses, and woolly hair, phenomena which have fruitlessly exercised the philosophers and theologians of our own days, but which, from the effect of more or less knowledge, were beheld with little attention by the ancients. On the adjoining territory, and still nearer to the equator, the natural black of the Abyssinians, improved by a mixture of Arabian blood, has misled the naturalist, by affording the singular proof that four thousand years are not sufficient to change the colour of the human race.

The theologians of the present day, conceiving themselves much better informed than those of former ages, have asserted, that the negroes descend in a direct line from the loins of Cain, whose nose, they say, was flattened by the hand of God, and whose body was stained black as his murderous soul, to imprint the everlasting character of an

assassin*. The learned of an earlier age taught in the schools of philosophy that the Æthiopians were the posterity of Chus, or of Canaan, or of Ismael; and the Abbé Pluche has defended the latter opinion with a warmth which could be exceeded only in his attack on Newton and Descartes; consistently abusing the defenders of the truth, after having vainly contended with truth itself.

Without presuming to discuss the truth or propriety of these lofty speculations, the historian may venture an observation which seems justified by experience—that it would be better were the Professors of Divinity to confine themselves more closely to the subject of their profession. Its confines are sufficiently extended to exercise all their mental faculties, and in overstepping its boundaries to pronounce an opinion on subjects which they might be pardoned for their ignorance of, they render themselves the sport of philosophy and the derision of their enemies. It might occur to them that, deceived as they have been in the science of geography, in condemning the learned bishop, Virgile—in astronomy, by censuring Galileo—in metaphysics, by passing sentence on Jordan le Brun and the immortal Locke—and in physic, by burning so many

* The author of "An Essay on the Population of the New World" glories in having been the first to explain the colour of the negro race by this descent, ignorant that Labat and Gumilla have long since noticed the pious extravagance. I will not further insult the reader with the opinions of the French and Spanish monks.

imaginary magicians, and their curious works, *they* might also err in the intricate path of natural history. As far as it is permitted to measure the degrees of nonsense, the idea of deducing the negro race from any of the heroes of Jewish record is scarcely more remote from the precincts of reason than the opinion of the ancients, whose philosophic curiosity was quickly satisfied by the fable that the blacks date their origin and hue from the scorching they received in the fall of Phaeton *. One author (of the seventeenth century!) abuses, in a most singular manner, the faculty of reasoning by a serious assertion, that the first female of the human race was oviparous—that eggs of two descriptions gave birth to the white tribes of the North and the distinct negroes of Æthiopia †.

To establish a system which may account for the origin or colour of the negro race, there seems, therefore, no alternative between Ismael and Cain, or between the white and black eggs; and although it may be deemed unpardonable to pull down so ancient a fabric and leave its site unoccupied, the prudent historian will choose that alternative as the safest, where the materials are so distant, and the

* " Sanguine tum credunt in corpora summa vocato
Æthiopum populos nigrum traxisse colorem."

† The reader may consult Mémoires de l'Acad. des Sciences, part. 30, art. 13, an. 1702; or the Traité de la Couleur de la peau humaine, par M. le Cat; or Hunter, or Zimmerman, or a multitude of writers, who have all left the matter pretty much as they found it.

nature of the work so fragile. Our curiosity may be more easily gratified by the inquiry of how far the arts and improvements of the East*, and afterwards those of Rome, might, in the early ages of the world, have penetrated into the wilderness of Æthiopia, whether any rays of Christian light have ever been thrown into the dark regions of central Africa, and what were their source and direction.

Little information on this interesting subject can be obtained from our modern acquaintance with the inhabitants of the western shores of the continent, whose native institutions have been mingled with European habits, and whose morals, bad as they naturally are, have been rather corrupted than improved by the commercial intercourse. Bosman †, the best and fullest writer on the Guinea coast, affords every information with respect to the state and habits of the negroes there; but his descriptions serve only to assure us, that the mixture of European vice and African barbarity has so corrupted the native manners of the inhabitants, that no opinion can now be formed of their original condition. Nor can we hope to obtain much better information relative to the interior of the impenetrable continent. Pierce it on which side we will, an insurmountable barrier of barbaric strength opposes our progress,

* See the first volume of the Hist. de l'Afrique, par Cardonne, and the Encyclopedia of Noviari, the sixth chapter of the fifth section.

† Voyage de Guinea. 1705.

or, at least, forbids our return; and we are thus compelled to rest satisfied with the contemplation of a tormenting fact which history affords us, namely, that the African world was far more accessible to the ancients than it has ever been to us. Perplexed with doubtful reports, which can neither be safely rejected nor satisfactorily believed, the historian is still confined to the narrow limits of the oriental annals, and to the more recent conquests of the Romans and the Portuguese, while even the information which he there may gather is everywhere dark and imperfect.

Such are the difficulties which oppose any attempt to discover *how far* the inhabitants of Asia, those of Egypt, Rome, Scandinavia, Arabia, and finally those of Portugal, may have successively found their way into the interior of the third vast quarter of the earth. Our present inquiry must be confined to the fact, that the negroes, whose temporal and spiritual welfare, the wealth and blood of Britain has lately been profusely expended to promote, have in earlier ages of the world possessed far greater means of improvement than *we* have ever afforded them; that twelve hundred years ago the religion of Christ, and the doctrines of the Koran, exerted their influence upon the banks of the Senegal, and the Gambra, and even upon the distant inhabitants of central Æthiopia. Six hundred Egyptian monasteries had already poured forth their myriads of holy warriors, for whom the burning sands of the desert, nay death itself, had

no terrors, since life had no delight; and the speed of the zealous missionary was promoted by the fleetest Arabian dromedaries. Two channels for the gentle stream of religion were then open: one extending from Rome, or from Egypt, along the northern confines of Africa to the waves of the western ocean; the other through the heart of the continent, from the Abyssinian sources of the Nile to the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. The simplicity of the Gospel would be fashioned and painted with the colours of pagan superstition, but it is more than probable that a corrupt species of Nestorian Christianity was professed by the negro tribes to the north and south of the Libyan desert, even in an early period of the fifth century*.

What might have been the state of Africa in the earlier ages of the world, history has not condescended to inform us; and our knowledge is there bounded by the lonely fact that it was from thence Solomon procured his ivory and negroes for the ornament or service of his temple. The intercourse was then, no doubt, through the upper provinces of Egypt; and from that land of mystery and light, some strong rays might glance at a very early period

* La Croze has afforded some facts, and much speculation, in his Hist. du Christianisme d'Ethiope. I must confess my total ignorance of the Eastern languages, with my gratitude to the translators of the Sherif al Edrissi, and of Abulfeda, with whose respectable names I am content to fortify my narrative: nor shall I hesitate to borrow the aid of the strongest glasses where the interesting object is so minute and distant

along the eastern edge of the vast deserts of Libya, and Zahara, to the forests of Mount Atlas; or, following the valleys of the Nile, penetrate even to its sources in the Mountains of the Moon.

I. From Cyrene to the Atlantic ocean the coast of Africa extends above five hundred leagues; yet so closely is it pressed between the Mediterranean and the Zahara, that its breadth seldom exceeds fourscore, or a hundred miles*. Till the arrival of the Phœnician colonies, that fertile country which lies to the eastward was inhabited by the Libyans, the most savage of mankind, at least, considered so until the interior tribes of Æthiopia were discovered: but under the immediate jurisdiction of Carthage it became the centre of commerce and empire. The wide extent of Numidia comprehends the present disorderly states of Tripoli and Tunis; the genuine Mauritania†, or country of the Moors, is represented by the modern kingdom of Fez; and the Roman city of Mequinez can now be scarcely recognised in the residence of the barbarian whom we condescend to style the *Emperor* of Morocco. When the name and distinction of the Vandals were lost in Africa,

* In the figurative language of the East it is called "the sleeve of the Arabian robe." Under the last of the Ommiads, the Arabian empire extended two hundred days' journey from east to west, from the confines of India to the waves of the Atlantic. (Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. ix. page 501.)

† Sallust represents the Moors as a remnant of the army of Heracles (de Bello Jugurth. c. 2.) See the travels of Shaw, page 220.

the boldest of the Scandinavian nation fled from the ruins of Mequinez, beyond the power of the conquering Romans, to enjoy their solitary freedom on the shores of the Atlantic; they spread along the coast, and the country which had been their empire, thus became their prison. This happened early in the sixth century, and the Vandals had embraced the religion of the Romans a hundred and thirty-five years before they were expelled from the kingdom of Africa; so that they were not ill-qualified for missionaries amongst the Moorish tribes. The limits of the Moors cannot be precisely defined; a boundless continent was open to the Libyan shepherds, the changes of seasons and pastures regulated their motions, and their reed huts were transported with as much ease as their arms, their families, and their cattle. Mount Aurasius was their citadel and the garden of Numidia; and the fair solitude is still decorated with the ruins of Lambesa, a Roman city, once the quarters of a legion, and the residence of forty thousand Christian inhabitants. From such a source, therefore, the religion of the Gospel might penetrate far into the country of the negroes, for the degenerate posterity of the Vandals was insensibly mingled with the common blood of Africa*; their language and character was extinguished; and nothing survived their fall but a latent spark of Christianity, which sunk into the desert, and was soon confounded with the pagan superstitions of the Senegal.

* Procopius. Vandal. l. 1. c. 22.; and l. 2. c. 10.

In the succeeding age, however, and within one hundred years after the flight of Mahomet from Mecca, the arms of the prophet, and the reign of his successors, extinguished all earlier traces of religion, and extended from India to the Atlantic, over the various and distant provinces of the African continent.

The Arabian conquest of Africa was first attempted by the arms of the Khalyf Othman, under the command of Abdallah, and about the year of Christ 647. At the head of forty thousand Moslems, the boldest and most dexterous horsemen of Yemen, he advanced from Egypt into the unknown countries of the west. The burning sands of the Zahara had been impervious to the Roman legions, but the Arabs were attended by their faithful camels, and the natives of the desert beheld with terror, that the aspect of the soil and climate was familiar to their powerful invaders. Tripoli was the chief object of the Commander of the Faithful; but Zobeir, a noble Arabian, who afterwards became the adversary of Ali, and the father of a Khalyf, was detached from the standard of Abdallah, and penetrated into the southern provinces whose natives trod the desert of Zahara. Sufetela had been built by the Romans*, at the distance of two hundred miles to the south of Carthage; and, after the fall of that opulent city, the

* The history of Abdallah will be found in Abulfeda (*Vita Mohammed.* p. 109), and in Gagnier (*Vie de Mahomet*, tom. iii. p. 45.)

provincials and barbarians implored from all sides the mercy of the Arabian conquerors. There, however, the western conquests of the Saracens were suspended during a period of nearly twenty years, and until their dissensions were composed by the establishment of the house of Ommiyah; when the Khalyf Moawiyah was invited by the cries of the Africans themselves, and the genuine force of the Moslems was increased by the aid and conversion of many of the negro tribes. The interior regions had been peopled, by the ignorance of the Orientals, with men of horrid aspect, with fictitious armies, and imaginary citadels; and the well-known cities of Bugier and Tangier clearly define the more certain limits of the Arabian conquests by the boundaries of the ocean itself. But the valleys of Mount Atlas would naturally conduct the Saracens to the interior, and along the coast to the latitude of the Canaries; while provinces still further south were explored by the agents of luxury, who searched the forests for ivory and the famous citron wood *, and the shores of the ocean for the purple or deep red shell fish. The Zahara possessed nothing which could frighten

* What this wood was, has confounded all inquiries; and Salmasius himself, who has exhausted the subject, only involves it in the web of his disorderly erudition. There seems still to be a doubt whether the fruit *citrum* and the tree *citrus* be one production; or even whether the citrum be the orange or the lime, the citron or the lemon. Pliny assures us (Hist. Nat. xiii. 29) that a table of this citron wood sold at Rome for eight, ten, or even twelve thousand pounds sterling.

the hardy conquerors from exploring its familiar sands, towards the heart of Africa; and the bright infancy of the faith of Islam roused its votaries to the most arduous exertions in behalf of the creed which gave to the successful missionary a superior paradise of sensual and costly luxury. Seventy-two Houris, or black-eyed girls, of resplendent beauty, blooming youth, virgin purity, and exquisite sensibility, were created for the use of the meanest believer*, and the image of a carnal paradise was impressed upon the minds of the Moslems in colours more lively than are the interested speculations of our modern missionaries.

The burning sands of the Great Desert are intersected by sharp and naked rocks, and the face of the earth, without shade or shelter, is there scorched by the direct and intense rays of a vertical sun. Instead of refreshing breezes, the winds diffuse a noxious and deadly vapour; the hillocks of sand, which they alternately raise and scatter, are compared to the billows of the ocean, and armies might be buried in a whirlwind. The common benefits of water are an object of desire and contest, and such is the scarcity of fuel that some art is requisite to preserve and propagate the element of fire. Yet the rapturous

* Gibbon shrewdly observes, that Mahomet has not specified the *male* companions of the *female* elect, lest he should alarm the jealousy of their former husbands, or disturb their felicity by the suspicion of an everlasting marriage. The historian could not decide which sad alternative was most distressing. Gibbon was not married.

contemplation of the groves and fountains, the rivers and the riches of paradise, urged the hardy race of Moors and Arabs to cross these thirsty sands, which drink the waters of the Atlantic, from the promontory of Siloe to the fertile banks of the Senegal, and, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, to follow the faint footsteps of Christianity to the provinces of the Foulis, the Ghiolofs, and the Mandingoes.

From the confines of the Red Sea*, the fearless Saracens, with Akbah at their head, plunged again into the very heart of the African provinces which bound the waters of the Atlantic, traversed the wilderness in which their successors erected the splendid capitals of Fez and Morocco †, and it is probable that a fresh stream of Mahometanism was then poured within the tropic. It was on the banks of the Sus, which descends from the western sides of Atlas, and falls into the sea in the latitude of twenty-eight degrees, that this Moslem Alexander, who sighed for new worlds, made the memorable speech which I have recorded in these pages. The banks of that river were inhabited by the last of the Moors, a race of savages who had little benefited

* The synonimous words ερυθρος and αιθιοψ, allude to the colour of the negroes alone, and our Red Sea (the Arabian Gulf) is no more than a part of the *Mare Rubrum*—the Ερυθρα θαλασση of the ancients, which was extended to that portion of the Indian Sea which washed the shores of the negro tribes.

† The third volume of *Recherches Hist. sur les Maures* illustrates the history and geography of Fez and Morocco.

by any previous intercourse with the Christian or Mahometan conquerors; and as they possessed neither gold nor silver, they were beneath the notice of the Saracens till they found a rich spoil in the beauty, or, more probably, the rarity of the female captives, some of whom were sold in the Arabian palaces for a thousand pieces of gold. It was the usual practice of the Moorish tribes to join their invaders, and revolt again to their savage independence and idolatry, on their first retreat or misfortune; but Zuheir, the third general or governor of Africa, persisted in their conquest and conversion, vanquished them in many battles, and firmly planted the standard of Mahomet upon the utmost verge of the Atlantic ocean. Fifty thousand tents of pure Arabians followed his footsteps across the Nile, and were soon scattered through the deserts and adjacent provinces, where five of the Moorish tribes to this moment retain the barbarous idiom, with the appellation of *white* Africans*. With the religion, the Moors were proud to adopt the language, names, and origin of the Arabs; the blood of the strangers and the natives was insensibly mingled, and from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, from the Pillars of Hercules to the banks of the Gambra, the reign of the Koran and the Crescent was firmly established; while the same nation might seem, to a careless observer, to be spread over the sandy plains of Asia

* See the observations of Dr. Shaw on the first book of Leo Africanus, p. 220, & seq.

and of Africa. The tenets of the Moslem faith were, however, much corrupted in their progress through so many pagan tribes to the western shore; and beyond the desert, which offered an obstacle to a fresh supply of faith from its original source, the doctrines of the Koran are now hardly to be distinguished from the innumerable institutions of polytheism. Yet amongst the negroes of Jamaica who are natives of the northern coasts of Africa, many of its institutions may still be traced by the eye of a careful observer; and whatever may be the influence of Christianity upon their sable offspring, it is to be feared that they themselves will never change their conduct or their *faith*. Indifference for rites and opinions marks the character of all the natives of western Africa, who accept, as loosely as they hold, every principle of religion; but the tribes of Foulis, Madingo, Ghiolofs, and Bambarra, amongst which we still trace the unity of God and the institutions of the apostle, practise the rite of circumcision, and observe the *Jente Karafana*, or Ramadan, with much greater respect and awe than they feel when they allow themselves to be sprinkled with the waters of baptism. Allah, the Mahometan appellation of the Deity, is still used in the different dialects of these tribes; and the Mandingoes, in their native land, pass for the most zealous missionaries of the prophet's faith * amongst nations where idolatry still

* Hist. Gén. des Voyages, tom. iv. p. 223.—Bosman (p. 213) notices the rite of circumcision as one apparently of Jewish

subsists, obscurely mingled with the tenets of the Koran. From the banks of the Gambra to the coasts of Guinea, the natives are firmly established in the doctrine of the Metempsychosis, yet they scruple not to devour the carcase which their own souls may one day occupy: they sacrifice calves to the devil, and the first object which presents itself to their waking eyes becomes the deity of the day. They reckon the years by the periodical falls of rain; the Friday is their sabbath, and though they rank the mother of Jesus as one of the four perfect women of the prophet's faith, they look upon her Son under the name of *Nale*, as an inferior prophet, famous only for his miracles *. They maintain a *Marbut*, or priest, in every village; believe implicitly in the doctrine of predestination, and reduce the stated

origin. I am aware that it was practised in all sultry regions, even in America, long before the introduction of the law of Moses, *ob consuetudinem, non ob judiasmum*, says Gregory, the Abyssinian priest. Though it appears to have been adopted originally rather from a physical than a religious motive, it is a refinement which the barbarity of the negroes gives us no reason to believe that they would have discovered, had it not been suggested to them; and the days of Solomon's access to them, rather than the more recent doctrine of the Koran, might have effectually established the practice. I may not translate, and I will not transcribe, the curious observations of M. de Pauw: (Recherches Phil. sur les Américains, tom. ii. p. 130—132.)—a strange medley of loose knowledge and lively wit, which should be weighed with attention and received with caution. In that splendid national work, the Hist. Gén. des Voyages, is a copious vocabulary of the African dialects; and to its scientific pages I am indebted for the principal facts detailed in this chapter.

* Jobson's Voyage, p. 73.

prayers of the Koran, from the daily number of five, to the more convenient quantity of three. Such are the institutions of the Mahometan religion which are still discoverable amidst the more barbarous superstitions of the negroes in their native land, and the attentive observer may trace their shade in the character and habits of those who have been transported to Jamaica from the marshy shores below the northern tropic.

II. To discover any ray of light which could find its way from Europe or Asia to the numerous tribes of central Africa, or reach to the more southern provinces which lie within ten degrees on either side of the equator, we must turn our attention to the history and situation of Abyssinia; the shores which, opposed to the Gulf of Guinea, form the comparatively narrow waist of the vast continent of Africa. From thence, or, in earlier ages, from Nubia and Egypt, some faint rays of civilization might probably shoot along the eastern confines of the desert, and pierce even into the darkest provinces of Æthiopia and Alaba. We find that, in later years, when the Emperor Justinian carried his conquests to the utmost verge of the Abyssinian kingdom, he was reproached for an alliance with the Æthiopians, as an attempt to introduce a race of savage negroes into the system of civilized society; a fact which seems to prove that these people had made no great progress in the arts of social life. Still it is from Abyssinia that we must look for any latent and almost invisible spark which

may be found to lurk amongst the dark tribes of Guinea, or in the nations of the interior mountains. In the mighty expanse of the vast continent of Africa, the distance of fifteen hundred miles appears no insurmountable barrier to the vagrant tribes whose life was passed in wandering over a wilderness of wood or sand. Scarcely greater space than that separated the royal city Axume from the confines of Old Calabar; and it is not impossible that the present negro republic of Axim, on the Gold Coast, might have originally been a colony of the expatriated Axumites, established when that city was destroyed. Whatever might have been their communication with the old world in earlier ages, Christianity we know had raised the Axumites * far above the level of the African barbarians in the beginning of the sixth century. Their intercourse with Egypt, and the successors of Constantine, had communicated the rudiments of arts and sciences; their vessels traded to the shores of India, and seven kingdoms obeyed the Negus or Prince of the Abyssinians. As their own territory was bounded on the east by the Arabian Sea, on the north by the powerful kingdom of Nubia, and on the south by the mountains of Alaba and Adel, it is probable that these tributary states might have extended a considerable distance into the interior, in a westerly direction; and through the agency of their speculative merchants, it is not impossible that genuine

* Ramusio, tom. i. fol. 219. Axume, in the year 1520, was "luogo molto buono, e grande," he says.

negroes, even from the distant shores of Guinea, should have been seen in the vestibules and porticoes of the Byzantine palaces:—that the Ινδους *, in fact, those costly objects of female or royal luxury, were no other. Such a channel of communication as this fact would establish, might receive and conduct a copious and returning stream of improvement throughout the shores of the Atlantic; and, though it might soon be cut off, and lost amidst the forests of the interior, such faint traces of its progress would still remain as we, at this day, find amongst the negroes of the coast of Guinea.

The momentary junction of several tribes produces an army: their more lasting union constitutes a nation; and the supreme chief, whose banner is displayed in front deserves, in the eyes of savages, the honours of a royal name. Thus were the numerous African *kingdoms* constituted: they had no fixed abode; a desert of a thousand miles could not bound their steps, nor confine them to the most beautiful or fertile country, for which they possessed no taste; and what they might learn in one extremity of their continent, they would carry almost to the other, through nations as unsettled and ignorant as themselves. Nor ought it to excite our surprise that the African tribes should descend from the extremity of their continent, when we know that the northern hordes of Europe, nearly as barbarous, penetrated from the frozen ocean, almost to the tropic. The

* Terent. Eunuch. act. 1. scene 2.. Suet. in Aug. c. 83.

sable kingdoms appear, indeed, to have benefited very little from their intercourse with foreign nations, or even with each other; but a thousand accidents might cut off the channel of improvement; and their own continent, to which their narrow intellects confined them, is one dark realm of primitive barbarity, wherein the natives are alike incapable of improving any acquirement, forming any project, or making any progress in civilization or science. They have no system of morality to guide *their* actions, no taste but that of sensuality, no wish to gratify, but to wander and be idle. Africa is the parent of every thing that is monstrous in nature—there the passions rage without control, and the retired wilderness presents an opportunity to gratify them without fear or shame. Children, from the most tender age, are permitted to indulge the basest instincts of their nature; their mind, like their country, is a waste; and their only resemblance to the human species is in their exterior form, in which they are closely imitated by some of their native brutes.

Amongst such a people it must be a broad and rapid stream of religion and improvement that would not speedily be absorbed and lost. In the year 435, Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, was banished to Oasis, one of the *islands** of the

* Gibbon. The metaphor of islands is applied by the grave civilians to those comparatively happy spots which are distinguished by the luxuries of wood and water from the barren sands. Three of these are comprehended under the common

Libyan desert; and his zeal was still displayed in his attempt to convert the negro tribes which surrounded his retreat. But the Blemmyes, or Nubians, invaded his prison-house, and he would willingly have exchanged his captivity for a servitude amongst the negroes, had not his flight been punished as a new crime, and himself been dragged, and recalled, repeatedly from the confines of Æthiopia. In the seventh century, Benjamin, the Jacobite patriarch of Alexandria, fled from the persecution of Heraclius, to the sandy deserts of the interior; and the power which conferred the bishopric of Edessa on Baradæus, ordaining at the same time eighty thousand bishops, priests, and deacons, overlooked not the rich harvest, or glorious martyrdom, which invited them to Abyssinia, and the adjacent kingdoms. But these sources of Christianity were soon dried up, and little permanent benefit resulted to a people amongst whom a thousand missionaries, even if the climate permitted them to live, were but as a drop of water in the ocean.

In the sixth century, however, the Coptic patriarch, a rebel to the Cæsars, or a slave to the Khalyfs, still gloried in the obedience of the kings of Nubia and Æthiopia; and the extent of *their* dominions may be estimated by the boast of the proud churchman,

name of Oasis, or Alvahar. The one to which Nestorius was banished was the most southern, and therefore nearest to the negro tribes.

that the Nile rose within his grasp*; and that by pouring out or restraining its periodical waters, he could command the peace and plenty of the inhabitants of Egypt. The Nubian bishops, during many ages, were named and consecrated by the Jacobite patriarch of Alexandria; and some rites and ruins of their power and religion are still visible in the savage tribes of Sennar and Dongola; while the remains of a Christian temple and sixteen Grecian obelisks adorn the royal devastation of Axume. Here then we find the arts, which flourished in the most civilized of all the European states, exhibited in the very heart of Africa, and Christianity raising the lasting monuments of its faith and power. But a metaphysical religion, even in those days of its primitive simplicity, was much too refined for the capacity of negroes; and although a black or a parrot might be taught to repeat the Chalcedonian or Monophysite creed, their intellect could neither comprehend its reason nor even retain its words. The climate, too, required the indulgence of polygamy; and in the Christian kingdom of Nubia the triumph of the Koran was soon preferred to the abasement of the Cross.

Still, however, Christianity continued more deeply rooted in the remote mountains of Abyssinia; and,

* Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," from which I obtain the facts contained in this and the following paragraph.

encompassed in the east and north by the enemies of their religion, the Æthiopians, who could make proselytes only of their neighbouring negro allies, slept more than a thousand years, forgetful of the rest of the world, by which they were alike forgotten. Holding no intercourse but with the interior tribes, whose conversion they would naturally labour to effect, they relapsed into their original savage life; their vessels, which had once traded to Ceylon, scarcely presumed to navigate the rivers of Africa; the negroes, who had been their disciples, forgot all that they had acquired; and when the avarice of the Portuguese awakened their slumbering activity in the sixteenth century, the ruins of Axume were totally deserted, the nation was scattered throughout the interior in paltry villages, and the humble king was contented with the vagrant pageant of a camp. It was during this long interval of oblivion that the Abyssinians found their way across the contracted dimensions of the continent, to the shores of the Gulf of Guinea: their incursions might drive the savage hordes of the Giajas to seek a safer retreat upon a distant land, and some wandering colony might then perpetuate the memory of its ruined splendour in the humble province of Axim. The best blood of Yemen still, however, was running in their veins, although the hue of Africa obliterated every apparent trace. Those who still retained possession of their original land, looked with contempt upon the jet black skin of the neighbouring Moslems

of Nubia; and though the memory of past events cannot long be preserved amidst the frequent and remote emigrations of illiterate barbarians, it is probable that, in the conflict of hostile nations, the victors and the vanquished alternately drove and were driven from the confines of Abyssinia to the shores of the Atlantic*. The thirst of rapine, the fear or the resentment of injury, has, in every age, been sufficient to urge the barbarous tribes to advance into unknown countries, where they might hope to find a more plentiful subsistence, or a less formidable enemy; and it was, no doubt, in retaliation of some such hostile invasion that the inland barbarians had ravaged the confines of the fallen nation, and transported their treasures into the very heart of Africa.

Such was, in fact, the forlorn condition of the Abyssinians, when, after their long oblivion, the light of history once more breaks upon them; and they were saved from the just revenge of their numerous foes by four hundred and fifty Portuguese, who had found their way round the southern extremity of Africa, and who displayed in their cause the native valour of Europeans, assisted by the artificial powers of the modern art of war. Their empire was instantly restored, and enlarged, by the terror which their fire-

* Three thousand Ethiopians or blacks, who were armed with flails or scourges of iron, signalized their courage in the siege of Ascalon during the first crusade, A.D. 1099. (See William of Tyre, lib. x.) More probably they were Nubians.

arms created; and it was still increased by the supposition of their deliverers that it contained more gold than the mines of America; while the wildest hopes of avarice and religious zeal were built upon the willing submission of the new-discovered *Christians* of Africa. The poison of heterodoxy was, however, speedily introduced, and it was as fatal to Abyssinia as it promises to be to England. Several sects started up, triumphed, and were defeated. In the year 1626, a Portuguese Jesuit, the *Catholic* Patriarch of Æthiopia, assuming the title of Urban VIII., converted the Emperor to the *new* faith of Rome, suppressed the Abuna, the head and author of the Abyssinian priesthood; and at length urged the desperate zeal of the natives, who expelled "the hyænas of the west," and shut the gates of that solitary realm for ever against the arts, the sciences, and the fanaticism of modern Europe*.

Thus have we again lost sight of Abyssinia and the tribes of central Africa. But before the eastern confines of the continent were closed against the research of the Europeans, those of the west had been opened for the purpose of obtaining an unknown race of people, who, it was thought, could sustain

* The triumphs of Scipio and Belisarius have proved that the African continent is neither impenetrable nor invincible: yet the great princes and powers of Christendom have repeatedly failed in their attempts to obtain only a commercial intercourse with any portion of its inhabitants; while their armaments against the natives of even those shores which are nearest to them have been singularly unfortunate.

the confinement of the mines, or the labours of the field, in the depopulated regions of America; and *our* acquaintance with the negroes, whose humanity was then hardly decided, was introduced by a commerce, at first carried on by private adventurers, but soon established as a national concern, by the most illustrious of England's queens.

# NOTES.

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*Note* I.—p. 4.

HERODOTUS (lib. ii.) asserts, that the Egyptians were originally, and in the most brilliant ages of their history, pure, unmixed negroes, of the same race as all the natural inhabitants of Africa. Mingling through many ages with the Greek and Roman blood, they lost the intensity of their original complexion, and preserved only the peculiar stamp of feature which still distinguishes them. The Copts, one of the most barbarous of the existing tribes inhabiting the Saïd, are, perhaps, the pure representatives of the original Egyptians, and are still dark mulattoes, a wonderful instance, *if* the testimony of Herodotus be worthy of credit, of barbarity and ignorance issuing from an alliance of the profound genius of the Egyptians with the brilliant spirit of the invading Greeks. But I am always apt to suspect historians and travellers of improving extraordinary facts into general laws; and this assertion of Herodotus strengthens the suspicion, that the reproach which dedicates his books to the Muses is not without reason. The hair, shape, features of the Abyssinians (and thence the Egyptians) rather mark them as Arabian colonies; and the Arab cast of feature and complexion which has been preserved more than thirty-four centuries, will justify the belief that race, as well as climate, must have contributed to form the negroes, whose noses the hand of Nature has flattened, covered their heads with shaggy wool, and tinged their skin with indelible blackness.

Philosophic minds cannot refrain from investigating the infancy of great nations, although our curiosity consumes itself in toilsome and disappointed efforts; for there is not a large tract of country which has ever been found destitute of inhabitants, or whose first population can be fixed with any degree of certainty. Moore, in his elegant little work, THE EPICUREAN,

reasonably opposes to the testimony of Herodotus on this point the observations of several travellers, who have scientifically dissected the mummies, and carefully examined the Egyptian sculptures The expression of Herodotus, μελαγχροες, και ουλοτριχες, certainly ill accords with the description of Cleopatra, and of the beautiful queen of Memphis. America, however, in all her institutions, still offers an extraordinary field for contemplation as well as for speculation. The use of letters is here three thousand years behind their origin in the East, and justifies the assertion, " que la raison voyage à petites journées de l'Est à l'Occident." They were introduced amongst the savages of Europe fifteen hundred years before Christ, and thence carried to the American isles about the same number of years after Christ. Bochart, in his " Sacred Geography," (l. iii. c. 9,) expresses his opinion that America was peopled by the posterity of Japheth through the straits of Anian.

*Note* II.—p. 4.

The theory and practice of antiquity, with regard to the sacrament of baptism, have been copiously explained by Chardon, Hist. des Sacremens, and by Bingham, in the tenth and eleventh books of his Christian Antiquities. The Fathers, who censured the delay of that sacrament, denied not, however, the certain efficacy even of a death-bed baptism. The discretion of parents often, indeed, suspended the baptism of their children till they could understand the obligations which they contracted; and, though attended with the most pernicious consequences, it was never condemned by any general or provincial council, or by any public act or declaration of the church. By the delay of baptism, the early proselytes of Christianity ventured freely to indulge their passions in the enjoyments of the world; and believing that the sacrament contained a full and absolute expiation of sin, they thus retained in their own hands the means of a sure and easy absolution which could never be repeated. The negroes here hold the same opinion, and the example of those who ought to know better strengthens them in it.

The extraordinary prejudice and short-sighted policy of the Jamaica planters, which forbids marriage amongst their *white* dependants, would inspire a belief that so ungallant an interdiction must have been the result of the Roman censor's opinion. " Si sine uxore, Quirites, possemus esse; omnes ea molestia

careremus; sed quoniam ita natura tradidit ut, nec cum illis satis commodi, nec sine illis ullo modo vivere possit; saluti perpetuæ potius quam brevi voluptati consulendum." (AULUS GELLIUS, *Noct. Att.* lib. i. cap. 2.) Not being myself a candidate, I may venture to encounter the indignation of female vanity for the sake of information, by translating the public address of Metellus Numidius, the destruction of whose effigy should be celebrated in the ceremonies of the opening month of May; for he assured the people that, had kind Nature allowed us to exist without the aid of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and that he could recommend matrimony only as a sacrifice of private pleasure to the public good.

The empire of the sex was so arbitrary amongst the natives of ancient Europe, that the Romans permitted the marriage portion to be settled *before* consummation, but not afterwards; founding their law upon the principle, that amongst them the conjugal tie was not the result of frugality, simplicity, or modesty, but that of passion alone, which might be taken undue advantage of by the happiness which the object had conferred or could withhold.—MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit des Loix*, lib. xix. c. 25. That judicious author makes the following observation upon the subject: "Les Romains par leurs loix arrêtèrent quelques inconvéniens de l'empire du monde le plus durable, qui est celui de la vertu; les Espagnols par les leurs vouloient empêcher les mauvais effets de la tyrannie du monde la plus fragile, qui est celle de la beauté."

The prodigality of conjugal love was severely restrained by the Visigoths, amongst whom it was illegal for a husband to bestow any gift or settlement on his wife during the first year of their marriage; and then his liberality could not, at any time, exceed the tenth part of his property. "The Lombards," says Gibbon, "were somewhat more indulgent: they allowed the *morgincap* immediately after the wedding night; and this famous gift, the reward of virginity, might equal the fourth part of the husband's substance. Some cautious maidens, it seems, were wise enough to stipulate beforehand a reward which they were not quite sure of earning."

It remained, however, for Jamaica policy alone to discourage marriage altogether amongst the most industrious and most useful portion of her inhabitants.

With respect to the necessity of public worship, it will be

sufficient to say, that though the devotion of the philosopher may be secretly nourished by prayer, meditation, and study, yet *that* appears to be the only solid foundation of the religious sentiments of a people which derive their force from imitation and habit. The interruption of that public exercise may consummate, in the period of a few years, the important work of a national revolution.

*Note* III.—p. 5.

The sectarians of Jamaica, aware of the power of melody over the negro mind, have introduced vocal music amongst their congregations with peculiar effect: for so susceptible are the Africans of the influence of that art which variously affects the mind by the mysterious power of sound, that they will scarcely give any attention to a religious instructor who possesses a harsh or discordant voice. Every good speaker, independently of the softness of his tones, raises and lowers them in strict musical intervals; so that, in fact, his discourse is as capable of being noted in musical characters as any melody whatever, becoming disagreeable only when those intervals are uniformly the same, or when the same intonations are used to express sentiments of the most opposite import. Of this qualification the negroes are naturally most extraordinary judges. Music, indeed, has ever been found to possess the greatest influence in commanding the passions of the most barbarous; and it has, therefore, been an art of more importance amongst uncultivated than with civilized nations. Accordingly, we find the negroes, and all barbarous tribes in every clime and every age, to have expressed all strong emotions of the mind by music. Thus they celebrated their solemnities—by it they lamented their private and their public calamities, the death of friends, the loss of warriors—by it they expressed their joy on their marriages, harvests, huntings, victories; praised the actions of their gods and heroes; excited each other to war, and to suffer death and torments with unshaken fortitude. If we contemplate a nation of savages in any part of the globe, a supine indolence, and a carelessness of futurity, will be found to constitute the general character; and nothing is so likely to rouse the negro to a sense of religious duty as the operation of a power to which nature has made him peculiarly subservient. It has been lately attempted in England to counteract the advantages which the

Methodists possess in their forms of worship over the tamer ritual of the church; and a more extensive introduction of psalmody is there restoring the established service to its primitive force and purity.

The zeal of the largest parish in Jamaica caught the reviving flame; and, following the directions of the Rubric, the Te Deum, the Jubilate, and the responses to the Commandments were chanted in the sublime strains of Kent and Handel, and assisted by an organ which was expressly built. The vacant benches of the church were *immediately* crowded; the negroes left the dissenting chapels, and deserted even the Sunday market; their attention was fixed upon the service, and the public registers proved, that during the ten months which followed the renewal of a neglected form of worship, the conversions to Christianity were more numerous than ever, and the rites of marriage more frequently applied for.

The arbitrary power of the first Bishop of Jamaica stopped this service, without the ordinary mode of assigning a reason for so extraordinary and unpopular a measure. The inhabitants in a body petitioned, remonstrated, but in vain; and at length, finding that it would involve their Rector in a serious dispute, yielded to a power which an English Bishop would never have exercised; but which relieved them of a very considerable expense, while it left them the credit of having done their utmost to promote the interests of religion. The service resumed its wonted monotony—the Dissenters triumphed, and the church was again deserted. It would be superfluous to add a weaker, it would be difficult to find a stronger example of the prevalence of those machinations which seek the destruction of Jamaica and the defamation of its people.

Thomassin (Discipline de l'Eglise, tom. i. l. ii. c. 72, 73, p. 966—984) has collected some curious facts concerning the origin and progress of church singing, which will astonish the reader at this singular interference of a Protestant Bishop, who, though irregularly constituted in many particulars, enjoys far greater power over his clergy than any one on the bench of peers. But we may approach nearer to our own case and times; and at the fountain-head of our Rubric draw the following authority for the use and definition of chanting *and* singing in our parish churches.

" The Queen's Majesty (Elizabeth), neither meaning in anywise the decay of any thing that might conveniently tend to the use and continuance of the said science, neither to have the same so abused in any part of the church that thereby the Common Prayer should be the worse understood by the hearers, willeth and commandeth, that, first, no alterations be made of such assignments of Living as heretofore hath been appointed to the use of singing or music in the church, but that the same so remain. And that there be *a modest and distinct song so used in all parts of the Common Prayer in the church, that the same may be as plainly understood as if it were read without singing:* and yet nevertheless, for the comforting of such as delight in music, it may be permitted that in the beginning and in the end of Common Prayer, either at morning or evening, there may be sung *an hymn, or such like song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best melody and music that may be conveniently devised,* having respect that the sense of the hymn may be understood and perceived. According to which order, as plain song (chanting) was retained in most parish churches for the daily psalms, so in her own chapels, and in the quire of all cathedrals, and some colleges, the hymns were sung after a more melodious manner, with organs commonly and sometimes with other musical instruments, as the solemnity required. No mention here of singing David's psalms in metre, though afterwards they thrust out the hymns which are herein mentioned, and by degrees also did they the *Te Deum,* the *Magnificat,* and the *Nunc dimittis.*"—(HEYLYN's *Ecclesia Restaurata,* p. 117. London edit. 1661.)

Thus it would appear that the present mode of performing divine service in cathedrals and parish churches has been reversed within the last three centuries.

*Note* IV.—p. 6.

In the fifty-seventh Note of the first volume of this work I have noticed a prevalent report that President Bradshaw was buried in Jamaica. The exertions of a valued relative in England have since furnished me with the following letter from the pen of Bryan Edwards, the historian, which throws some light upon the obscurity of that transaction. It appears, from the inquiries I have made, that there are still extant two patents of land, situated near the town of Martha Brae, in the name of James

Bradshaw; and which were surveyed, June 4th, 1688, one for 250 acres, the other for 650. Within their confines is a high hill which is marked, and still known, by the name of the Gun Hill. On that hill three estates are now united and possessed by George Cunningham and Edward Atherton, Esqrs., namely Green Park, Greenside, and Maxfield. On the plat of the late William Campbell, the situation of the gun itself is laid down; and the old negroes affirm that they have seen it; but the industry of the Crown surveyor, who went over the land a few years since, did not discover it. Nor is it extraordinary that the luxuriant growth of vegetation, and its rapid decomposition, around the spot, should have long since concealed even so imperishable an object from the eye of a superficial observer.

The original of the following letter is in the possession of a branch of the ancient and respectable family of the Bradshaws, who possess property at Chipping Sodbury in Gloucestershire, and in whose hands are deposited the documents which ordained the execution of the first Charles.

"*January 13th*, 1775.

"My dear Sir,

"I have great pleasure in obeying your commands in regard to the epitaph I told you of on John Bradshaw. The circumstances of his burial in Jamaica are said to be these. The President died in England a year before Cromwell. His son, James Bradshaw, seeing from the general spirit which began to prevail, that the restoration of the royal line would probably take place on the Protector's death, and being well assured on that event that such of the late king's judges as should be then living could have little hopes of safety, was apprehensive that even the grave would not protect his father's ashes from insult; and having many friends and relatives among Cromwell's soldiers who had lately settled in Jamaica, on the conquest of that island from the Spaniards, he embarked thither with his father's corpse, which the soldiery on his arrival interred with great honour, on a very high hill, near a harbour now called Martha Brae, and placed a cannon on the grave by way of memorial. James's apprehensions were well grounded, for the parliament, on the restoration, ordered the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw to be dug up, and hung up at Tyburn,—a foolish and impotent mark of vengeance which, however, the remains of

Bradshaw, through the pious care of his son, fortunately escaped. Certain it is that the body of Bradshaw could not be found in Westminster Abbey where it was supposed to be buried.

" Such is the tradition which prevails in Jamaica: but though I always entertained a great respect for the memory of this distinguished person, as well as from the firmness and ability which he displayed on the king's trial, as from his uniform conduct and steady virtue in his opposition afterwards to the tyranny of Cromwell, yet I should have treated the tradition as wholly fabulous, had not a gentleman of strict honour and veracity, now living in Jamaica, assured me, that in consequence of it he had caused a search to be made for the cannon said to be placed on the grave, *which he actually found on the reputed spot.* The place is now so entirely covered with wood, that he believes no human footstep has trod there for a century past, and it is clear that a great exertion of human strength, which is seldom bestowed (voluntarily at least) in such a climate, on trivial occasions, must necessarily have been employed in placing the cannon where it lies. This gentleman found also, by searching the public records, that the land *was* afterwards patented in the name of James Bradshaw.

" On this concurrent testimony it was proposed to erect a cenotaph to the President's memory; and the lines which I repeated to you were intended by way of inscription, a copy of which you have herewith. I wish this account may give you satisfaction, being, with great regard, &c. &c.

" BRYAN EDWARDS.

" Stranger,
Ere thou pass, contemplate this marble:
nor regardless be told
that near its base lies deposited
the dust of
JOHN BRADSHAW;
who, nobly superior to all selfish regards,
despising alike what the world calls greatness,
the blast of calumny, and the terrors of returning vengeance,
presided in that illustrious band
of Heroes, and Patriots,
who openly, and fairly, adjudged
Charles Stuart, King of England,
to a public and exemplary death;

thereby presenting to the astonished world,
and transmitting down through applauding ages,
the most glorious instance of unshaken virtue,
love of freedom, and impartial justice,
ever exhibited
on the blood-stained theatre of human action.
Oh! Reader!
pass not on till thou hast blessed his memory;
and never forget
that rebellion to Tyrants is obedience to God."

The Creoles are peculiarly tenacious of their genealogy; the meanest and the most ignorant preserve with conscious pride that inestimable treasure; and whatever distinctions of rank may have been introduced by the unequal distribution of colonial wealth, they mutually respect themselves and each other, as the descendants of those men who fought or fell in the contests of the house of Stuart, and who fled from a persecuting land to achieve the conquest of Jamaica.

*Note* V.—p. 7.

During the period of the Saxon government, even in its most mature and finished form, the parliament consisted not of two *distinct* houses; for the peers or freeholders of extensive territories were considered as the hereditary representatives of their vassals or tenants. In the Scots parliament there was also but *one* house, constituted of the three estates:—the peers, the representatives of the shires, and the commissioners of the boroughs. But these three estates always sat as one house, and voted conjointly; with the solitary exception that, in committees, the proportion from each was limited and fixed. The parochial vestries, in Jamaica, are, in fact, a type of the early legislatures of Britain, where the chief magistrate represents the sovereign; the inferior magistrates the nobles; and the vestrymen are the representatives of the people: while they all sit, deliberate, and vote together, and upon rights equally constitutional.

It was upon these simple precedents, indeed, that the early colonial grants were framed, wherein but one house of legislature was ever named or contemplated—the governor or president, the council of assistants, and the representatives of the people, uniting in one body, one decision, and one act of government. I have traced, in the first volume, the steps by which these three estates, in Jamaica, approximated the form and practice of the

parent state, by separating into three distinct negatives. Still, they are so nicely counterpoised in their monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical powers, that they enjoy the conveniences of each form, with the disadvantages of neither. In Carolina, an *hereditary* council of Palatines, or Caciques, was once contemplated; but in Jamaica the second negative is more safely, or suspiciously, intrusted to members appointed by the Crown, *durante bene placito*, while in no other point does her government constitutionally differ from that of Great Britain.

*Note* VI.—p. 8.

In the year 1757, Jamaica *was* officially designated a province, by the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General of England.—(*Journals of Assembly*, vol. v., p. 7.) In the Roman empire were the distinctions of provinces, colonies, and municipal towns; and the Emperor Hadrian we find expressing his surprise, that the cities of Utica, Italica, and Gades, should solicit the title of *colonies*, when they already enjoyed the rights of *municipia*. Their example, however, became fashionable; and the empire was thus filled with honorary colonies. The *municipium* was, in fact, an enfranchised town, where the inhabitants enjoyed their own laws and customs, and were at the same time honoured with the privileges of Roman citizens, though that privilege reached no further than the bare title. Some, indeed, by particular interest or merit, obtained the liberty of votes, which occasioned the well-known distinction—*municipium cum suffragio*. Those without that distinction were denominated Romani; such as possessed it were called Cives Romani. Plantations or colonies, in distant countries, are either such as are claimed by right of occupancy only,—by finding them desert, and peopling them from the mother country,—or where, when already cultivated, they have been either gained by conquest, or ceded by treaties. Judge Blackstone distinguished between these two species of colonies, with respect to the laws by which they are to be bound. For it has been held, that if an uninhabited country be discovered, and planted by British subjects, all British laws, then in being, which are the birth-right of every subject, are immediately in force there. But such colonists carry with them, in fact, only so much of the British law as is applicable to their own situation, and to the condition of an infant colony—such as the general rules of inheritance, and of protection. The artificial

refinements and distinctions incident to the property of a great and commercial people, the laws of policy and revenue, the maintenance of the established clergy, and the jurisdiction of their spiritual courts, are neither necessary nor convenient for them, and therefore are not in force. What shall be admitted, and what rejected, at what times and under what restrictions, must, in cases of dispute, be decided, in the first instance, by their own provincial judicatures, subject to the revision of the king in council: the whole of their constitution being also liable to be new-modelled, and reformed by the general superintending power of the legislature in the mother country. A province, on the other hand, seems the more appropriate title for Jamaica; its strict definition being a country obtained by conquest, regulated by its own laws, and governed by a delegate from the throne.

*Note* VII.—p. 11.

In the year 1767, a species of soap, uniting all the qualities of the Castile soap to another of singular efficacy, a perfect solubility in salt water, was invented by Dr. Robinson, the naturalist. Its preparation is simple, its growth indigenous, its use unexceptionable; but the Assembly with great difficulty was prevailed upon to reward the discoverer, and the soap was never heard of more.

The process is this: the lower leaves of the *curaça*, or *coratoe*, a species of the *agavé*, are passed between heavy rollers to express the juice, which, after straining through a hair cloth, is merely inspissated by the action of the sun, or a slow fire, and cast into balls or cakes. The only precaution necessary is to allow no mixture of any unctuous materials, which destroy its efficacy.

How wide a field is here open for discoveries of a similar or more valuable nature!

*Note* VIII.—p. 70.

It was under Commodore Knowles, in the action of Porto Cavallo, in the year 1743, that Smollett, the novelist and historian, served as a cabin-boy; and he was afterwards made surgeon's mate. He libelled his admiral, was prosecuted, fined, and imprisoned in the Marshalsea.

*Note* IX.—p. 74.

A proof that the West Indian trade was carried on to a vast extent without the expense of an establishment, is afforded by the fact, that at least £400,000 sterling in commodities of British manufacturè, or the produce of the colonies, were, during the Spanish war, sent to the French islands from North America, which brought back to Great Britain the enormous profit of three millions of money. Saint Domingo, thus circumstanced, was, in the hands of the French, equally valuable as any of its own islands to the British nation. The trade was carried on with the implied consent of government; for it cannot be supposed that the British governors in North America, who granted flags of truce to private merchants, to carry French prisoners to Saint Domingo, and bring back others in return, at their own expense, were ignorant that in so doing they had a view to their private advantage: nor could they be ignorant how that advantage arose, when the flags returned to the ports from whence they first proceeded, and then made regular entries, at the several custom-houses, of the respective cargoes of foreign sugar with which they were loaded.

*Note* X.—p. 81.

"Instat terribilis vivis, morientibus hæres,
Virginibus raptor, thalamis obscænus adultor.
Nulla quies:—oritur præda cessante libido,
Divitibusque dies, et nox metuenda maritis."

*Note* XI.—p. 86.

Saint Jago de la Vega felt the weight, and might almost have applied the words, of Claudian's beautiful complaint of Rome.

"Hei mihi, quo Latiæ vires, Urbisque potestas
Decidit? In qualem paullatim fluximus umbram?
Armato quondam populo patriisque vigebam
Consiliis, domui terras, urbesque revinxi
Legibus," &c. &c.

Zeno enacted that all governors should remain in their provinces fifty days after the expiration of their power. (Code Just. l. ii. tit. 49. leg. 1.) How much would such an edict bring to light within the British colonies!

*Note* XII.—p. 87.

Party spirit, however pernicious, or absurd, is a principle of

union, as well as of dissension. More than once in the "Annals of Jamaica" the reader will be tempted to compare its council to that of Domitian in the fourth satire of Juvenal. In this instance, its members acted like useful scavengers; they industriously raked together all the dirt which soiled the fame of their favourite governor, heaped it out of sight, and dutifully endeavoured to show him to the world as a miracle of virtue.—See *Journals of Assembly*.

*Note* XIII.—p. 89.

This church had been, during the Spanish dominion, "the Red Cross Chapel de la Vega," so named in commemoration of the miraculous cross de la Vega, in Hispaniola, over which the king of Spain ordered a magnificent shrine to be built. The royal revenues had also been formerly expended upon the ancient abbey of Seville d'Oro, to which a sum was granted equal to whatever its titular abbot, Peter Martyr, might expend; and large domains, in the neighbourhood of the present hamlet of Saint Ann, were given to maintain its splendour. An hospital attached to it received a hundred thousand maravedis; but, according to the testimony of Herrera, the city was so healthy that the money was afterwards applied to the use of the church. The ruins of Seville have perished; and the place might be unknown, if some broken walls of the cathedral, buried beneath luxuriant cane-fields, did not guide the footsteps of the inquisitive traveller. But the situation cannot now boast of its salubrity, for, perhaps, there is not a more infectious air in the West Indies than that which arises from the stagnant water there; the sea having made considerable inroads since the days of Peter Martyr.

The church of Port Royal, which fell during the great earthquake, had been erected only ten years, on which occasion a prophetic text was the subject of the consecration sermon; and the succession of tremendous judgments, under which the unfortunate town soon laboured, could not but recall the words, "put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." I have before me a copy of this sermon, "printed at the request of Sir Henry Morgan and others, whose liberal contributions supplied the funds to build the church." It was in fact built with the fruits of piracy.—Thus, the King of Spain, who expended so much treasure in founding hospitals and churches in the New World, built the Escurial at the cost of six

millions of ducats, and the royal palace of Toledo, about the middle of the sixteenth century, with the money raised by duties on the sale of "Gelofes," Guinea slaves.

*Note* XIV.—p. 103.

One of the least desirable imports was the *formica omnivora*, the native ant of Cuba, which was brought by Thomas Raffles, under the absurd impression that it would devour its own lesser species, and free the island from the innumerable small insects which infest it: it has itself now become one of the greatest scourges. The smaller species of ant had been brought to these islands in the African slave-ships; and, at one period, ravaged Barbadoes and Martinique to such a degree, that the desertion of those colonies was seriously contemplated.

*Note* XV.—p. 104.

The treaty of Westphalia, of 1648—those of Madrid of 1667 and 1670—that of Nimegne of 1678—of Ryswick, 1697—of Utrecht, 1713—of Baden, 1714—the triple alliance of the Hague in 1717—the quadruple alliance of London in 1718—the treaty of Vienna in 1738—that of Aix-la-Chapelle of 1748—that of Madrid in 1750, with all the treaties between the crowns of Spain and Portugal in 1668-1715, and 1761—and that of April 1713, between France and Portugal, with the guarantees of Great Britain, formed the basis of this negotiation. By it, Great Britain restored to France the islands of Guadaloupe, of Mariegalante, of Desirade, of Martinique, and of Belleisle, receiving from that power, the islands of Grenada, and the Grenadines; while the partition of the neutral islands gave Dominica, with Tobago, to Great Britain, and Saint Lucia to France. The British fortifications in the bay of Honduras were to be destroyed; the conquered territory in Cuba, with the fortress of the Havanna, was to be restored to Spain; St. Augusta and Pensacola, the capitals of East and West Florida, were taken possession of by the British Crown, which relinquished the island of Goree; while France ceded that of Minorca; and Saint Vincent was given up to England; though no notice was taken of the Charaibes there, who numbered a thousand fighting men.

After the conclusion of the peace, the Court of London sent positive orders to the West India governors and naval commanders, to break off all intercourse with the French and Spanish

settlements; and in three months the French and Dutch islands gained, by smuggling, the many thousand dollars which would otherwise have enriched Jamaica. The colonists complained, and orders less rigorous were immediately issued.

*Note* XVI.—p. 106.

In consequence of this instruction, it was resolved that every member should enjoy the privileges of his person against arrest and imprisonment, but none in regard to their goods and chattels, *except such as are necessary to his accommodation during his attendance on the House.* An additional instruction from the crown afterwards extended this privilege; thus:—

"Whereas it hath been represented unto us, that, in consequence of several extraordinary resolutions and proceedings of the House of Representatives in our island of Jamaica, touching their privileges, and of the disputes which have subsisted between you and that house on this subject, the public business there has been obstructed, the minds of our good subjects disquieted, and the island reduced to great distress: In order, therefore, to evince the good will we bear to all our subjects, in all parts of our dominions, to restore peace and tranquillity to our said island, and to prevent, for the future, any disputes between our governor and assemblies of Jamaica, touching matters of privilege, it is our will and pleasure that, in addition to the privileges already allowed to the members of our council and assembly, in our said island, by our general instructions to you, there be allowed to every member of the said council and assembly, respectively, during the sitting of the general assembly, and for six days before the meeting of such assembly, and for the like number of days after an adjournment, prorogation, or dissolution, of such assembly, a further privilege from arrests in all civil suits, for such servants and equipages only as are absolutely necessary for the personal accommodation of such members in attending their respective duties in general assembly.

"And, in order to secure, as far as may be, these additional privileges from being violated, it is our further will and pleasure, that it be recommended to the members of the Council and House of Assembly, respectively, to cause to be set down in writing the names of the several servants, with a description of the equipage and other particulars, for which such additional privilege is to be allowed, to the extent above-mentioned, and, having subscribed

his name thereto, deliver, or cause such writing so subscribed to be delivered, to the provost-marshal-general of the said island, or his deputy, or left at the office of the said provost-marshal, to the intent that he, or his deputy, and all other officers and persons whom it may concern, may take notice of the same, and govern themselves agreeably thereto. G. R."

In consequence of this instruction, the Assembly, in the spirit of its constitution,

"Resolved—That this House hath, as the representative of the people of this island, all the privileges that the House of Commons hath as the representatives of the people of Great Britain; and that any instruction from the king and his ministry can neither abridge nor annihilate the privileges of the representative body of the people of this island."

*Note* XVII.—p. 109.

When Lyttleton's policy induced him to embarrass or suppress the Assembly, by obtaining from the British Treasury a power to draw for the contingencies of the Jamaica government, he well knew that the island would be called on to reimburse any sum he might choose to draw for; and accordingly the sum of thirty-five thousand pounds was demanded, over and above the immense loss which the colony sustained by the suspension of its senate.—See *Journals of Assembly*, vol. vi., pp. 102 and 140.

*Note* XVIII.—p. 111.

I am authorised in thus extending back the usual limits of the Slave Trade.—See *Appendix to the first volume of the Annals of Jamaica.* The extreme carelessness or credulity with which the Abbé Raynal collected his information is visible in his condemnation of a law of Constantine, which gave freedom, he affirms, to all the slaves who should embrace Christianity.—*Histoire des Indes*, tom. i. p. 8. That emperor did, indeed, publish an edict, which restrained the Jews from circumcising, perhaps from keeping, any Christian slaves.—*Theodosian Code*, lib. xvi. tit. 9. But this imperfect exception related only to the Jews; and the great body of the slaves, who were the property of Christian or pagan masters, could not improve their temporal condition by exchanging their religion. The early legislators of Jamaica (A. D. 1696) dealt at least fairly in this particular; for they positively enacted, that no slave, by becoming a Christian,

should enjoy freedom. The founders of slavery, in the West Indies, agreed with Lord Coke, that pagans should be treated as perpetual enemies and slaves; but that slavery was incompatible with the condition of a Christian,—from which it might have been inferred that baptism was virtual enfranchisement. In the year 1729, the Attorney and Solicitor Generals of England gave it as their opinion, that a negro slave, coming to Europe, or baptised anywhere, would not become free; an opinion acted upon until the year 1765, when the famous case of the negro Somerset was decided.

It may not be irrelative to call the attention of the reader to an historical fact, which, amidst all the prevailing discussions on the subject of slavery, seems to have escaped observation—namely, that at the period of the Norman Conquest, personal slavery, which had been established by the victorious Saxons, was still familiar to Britons; and that the edict of Ina, the legislator of Wessex, which exempted national slaves from being sold beyond the seas, was abolished by the new conqueror, under whose authority Ireland became the greatest, as probably the nearest, mart for English slaves. From the concurrent testimony of Bede (l. ii. c. 1) and William of Malmesbury (l. iii. p. 102) it appears that the Anglo-Saxons, from the first to the last age, persisted in the unnatural practice of selling themselves and their children in perpetual and foreign bondage. Their youths were publicly sold in the Roman market. When time and religion had mitigated the fierce spirit of the Anglo-Saxons, the laws encouraged the frequent practice of manumission; and their subjects, of Cambrian extraction, assumed the respectable station of inferior freemen, possessed of lands, and entitled to the rights of civil society.—GIBBON's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. vi., p. 397. The life of a Cambrian Christian, who possessed a hyde of land, was fixed, by Ina, at a hundred and twenty shillings; for a free Saxon, two hundred shillings; and for a Thane twelve hundred were allowed.—See *Ina*, tit. 32 *in legibus Angl.-Sax.*, Bede, and William of Malmesbury—treasures which, being in my library, I have thought it my duty, if not an amusement, to consult. In those ages, when any one had more children or servants than he could keep, he took them to the ready market of Bristol, and there found Irish merchants, ready to purchase. Malmesbury affirms, that it was no uncommon thing to behold young girls, exposed to sale there, in a state of preg-

nancy, which raised their value. It was not until the year 1771, that the Ecclesiastical Council of Armagh passed a resolution to enfranchise English slaves.

That baptism should confer freedom seems, however, to have been a tenet of the Spanish church, wherever it did not affect its own property: for when the Governor of Jamaica sent to Cuba, in the year 1719, to demand the restitution of some negroes, piratically taken from the parish of Saint Anne, he received for answer, "that, as to those and other fugitives, they were there as the other subjects of their lord and king, and being brought voluntarily to their holy church, had received the water of baptism."

The following is an account of Slaves brought from Africa to Jamaica, between the years 1702 and 1775. Of the total number (497,736,) 137,114 were exported, leaving 360,622 for the supply of the island, of which number 192,787 were alive in 1775:—

| Year. | No. of Negroes Imported. | Year. | No. of Negroes Imported. | Year. | No. of Negroes Imported. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1702..... | 843 | 1727..... | 3,876 | 1752..... | 6,117 |
| 1703..... | 2,740 | 1728..... | 5,350 | 1753..... | 7,661 |
| 1704..... | 4,120 | 1729..... | 10,499 | 1754..... | 9,551 |
| 1705..... | 3,503 | 1730..... | 10,104 | 1755..... | 12,723 |
| 1706..... | 3,804 | 1731..... | 10,079 | 1756..... | 11,166 |
| 1707..... | 3,358 | 1732..... | 13,552 | 1757..... | 7,935 |
| 1708..... | 6,627 | 1733..... | 7,413 | 1758..... | 3,405 |
| 1709..... | 2,234 | 1734..... | 4,570 | 1759..... | 5,212 |
| 1710..... | 3,662 | 1735..... | 4,851 | 1760..... | 7,573 |
| 1711..... | 6,724 | 1736..... | 3,943 | 1761..... | 6,480 |
| 1712..... | 4,128 | 1737..... | 8,995 | 1762..... | 6,279 |
| 1713..... | 4,378 | 1738..... | 7,695 | 1763..... | 10,079 |
| 1714..... | 5,789 | 1739..... | 6,787 | 1764..... | 10,213 |
| 1715..... | 2,372 | 1740..... | 5,362 | 1765..... | 8,931 |
| 1716..... | 6,361 | 1741..... | 4,255 | 1766..... | 10,208 |
| 1717..... | 7,551 | 1742..... | 5,067 | 1767..... | 3,248 |
| 1718..... | 6,253 | 1743..... | 8,926 | 1768..... | 5,950 |
| 1719..... | 5,120 | 1744..... | 8,755 | 1769..... | 3,575 |
| 1720..... | 5,064 | 1745..... | 3,843 | 1770..... | 6,824 |
| 1721..... | 3,715 | 1746..... | 4,703 | 1771..... | 4,183 |
| 1722..... | 8,469 | 1747..... | 10,898 | 1772..... | 5,278 |
| 1723..... | 6,824 | 1748..... | 10,430 | 1773..... | 9,676 |
| 1724..... | 6,852 | 1749..... | 6,858 | 1774..... | 18,448 |
| 1725..... | 10,297 | 1750..... | 3,587 | 1775. (to Sept. 30,) | 9,292 |
| 1726..... | 11,703 | 1751..... | 4,840 | Total.... | 497,736 |

The horrid state of the negroes, in their native land, would authorise the assertion, that this half million of transplanted Africans underwent no change for the worse. Without attempting to palliate the enormities of the slave-trade, which admits of no excuse or extenuation, it would be an easy, though a tedious task, to prove, from the authority of poets, historians, and philosophers, that the human savages of Africa are still the lowest of a species, universally naked in mind and body, destitute of laws, of arts, of ideas, and almost of language. The Icthyophagi, who in the time of Diodorus Siculus wandered along the shores of the Red Sea, and the natives of new Holland, are far superior to them, for *they* had acquired some arts and instruments; but the abject state of the negroes, perhaps the primitive and universal state of man, has never been raised in their native land. Is it left for the bishop of the western Indies to work the miracle that is expected of them, and to send back their enlightened neophytes, as missionaries to their native land?

I cannot help remarking, that an author of the present day, for whose talents and principles I have the greatest respect, (OLIVER *on Freemasonry*, p. 93,) observes, that "servitude was so terrible an innovation in the Divine economy, and so destructive of the principles of masonry, that Noah laboured, with incessant diligence and assiduity, to restore the primitive laws against slavery, and prevent amongst mankind an unnatural traffic in their own species." My ignorance desires to be informed what *labours* and what *laws* he refers to; and my incredulity makes me regret that he has not, with his usual caution, given any references. A prelate of the first eminence has declared that "there is no passage in the *Christian* scriptures by which slavery is condemned:" (PALEY)—and the slaves appointed to attend the masons in the sacred work of erecting the Temple of Solomon, amounted to no less than seventy thousand, classed under the term ISH SABBAL; nor can I recollect any passage in the Old Testament reproving the institution of slavery, though there are many condemning its abuse. (See Appendix to the first vol. of this work, p. 470.)

Amongst the most polished nations of antiquity, those most renowned for their love of freedom, the chains of slavery were the heaviest; and perhaps the Alani, a pastoral tribe which occupied, or wasted an extensive tract of the deserts of Scythia, were the only people amongst whom the pure love of freedom

rejected the use of domestic slaves. Servitus quid sit ignorabant omnes generoso semine procreati. (AMMIANUS MARCELL. lib. xxxi., p. 287, edit. 1533, *Marian.*)

*Note* XIX.—p. 118.

The conquests in the New World were all made in the name of the sovereigns of Castile alone, (*Annals of Jamaica*, vol. i. p. 122.) This excited great jealousy, for the kingdom of Castile was of recent origin, compared with that of Aragon, the country of the ancient Jaccetains. Castile was founded only in the year of our Lord 1022, and my ignorance is informed, by the inimitable D'Anville, that the appellation was expressive of the numerous *castles* independent of the Moorish yoke.

*Note* XX.—p. 118.

Moorish history with which, no doubt, Columbus was familiar, would inspire the intrepid and successful mariner with a firm conviction of the existence of "unknown kingdoms in the West." He would have read, in the annals of Spain, that in the seventh century, during the rapid progress of the Saracens through Africa towards that peninsula, when Akbah plunged into the heart of the country, traversed the wilderness in which his successors erected the splendid capitals of Fez and Morocco, and penetrated to the verge of the Atlantic, the Mahometan conqueror, inspired with the idea of a Western world, exclaimed in the language of a fanatic, "Great God! if my course were not stopped by the sea, I would still go on to the unknown kingdoms of the West, preaching the unity of Thy holy name, and putting to the sword the rebellious nations who worship any other gods than Thee." (See NOVAIRI, *apud Otter*, tom. i. p. 119.) The Moorish blood of Spain was, seven hundred years afterwards, outstripped in this enterprise by the rival issue of the Castilian nobles.

*Note* XXI.—p. 119.

This was the original name of the deep bay; and the Spaniards, finding it to correspond in sound and application with their own word Hondura, *deep*, retained it, till the last became the better understood.

The peninsula of Yucatan derived its name from its peculiar

fertility in the indigenous and daily food of its inhabitants: the word *Yuca*, in the native dialect, signifying cassava, and *Ilatli*, the ground on which it grows. The Indians, from the juice of the *bitter* cassava, which if unprepared is a deadly poison, formed a species of liquor of thick consistence, in which they dipped and preserved their animal food; and *a canary* full of this liquor occasionally replenished, and flavoured by the different meats which had been preserved in it, formed an hereditary and most valuable species of property. The mode of preparing it is thus described by the earliest historian of their land. Take any quantity of the expressed juice, put it into a flat-bottomed vessel, till the finer particles, or starch, sink; then draw off the pure liquid, and boil it slowly, skimming it all the time, till it become of the consistence of thick syrup, when add burnt sugar to colour it. The natives call it "Cassarepo;" and its flavour as a sauce is miraculous, if added in the proportion of a table-spoonful to stews and made-dishes. The raw juice of the potato is equally poisonous as that of the bitter cassava, the properties of which are infinite; and when we see the rich and glutinous grains of the tapioca manufactured from the same vegetable, it will excite no surprise that it should form one of the most delicious sauces of the table,—a knowledge of which might silence the French gourmands, who boasted that, while their rivals of the neighbouring isle had invented an hundred new religions, they had discovered only two new sauces.

*Note* XXII.—p. 125.

It is probable that the natives of Jamaica had originally emigrated from Yucatan.—(*Annals of Jamaica*, vol. i.) It is certain that they possessed the means of maintaining a perpetual intercourse of war, of friendship, or of conquest.

*Note* XXIII.—p. 134.

The name of Elias Ward, the pirate governor of Tortuga, in the year 1655, suffered a similar corruption: it was familiar and frightful to the Spaniards, who always wrote it Elyazoüard.

*Note* XXIV.—p. 137.

Du Tertre (tom. iii. p. 141) derives the word *buccaneer* from *boucan*, a sort of wooden gridiron, made of sticks placed upon four forks, on which the hog-hunters broil or *barbacue* their game.

They were at this time "une sorte de gens remassez," men from all countries, rendered expert and active by the necessity of their exercise, which was to go in chase of cattle to obtain their hides; and from being themselves hunted by the Spaniards, who never gave them quarter. As they owned no ruler, they were a savage race, reduced to this mode of life to avoid the punishments due to the crimes they had perpetrated in Europe;—generally without house or home, and collecting only where cattle were abundant. They erected sheds to lodge and defend the hides from the rain, until some vessel should pass, and they could barter them for wine, brandy, linen, arms, or ammunition.

*Note* XXV.—p. 144.

The first use to which mahogany was applied in England, arose from a circumstance purely accidental, and the costly wood attracted notice in the humble shape of a candle-box. Dr. Gibbons, an eminent physician of the seventeenth century, had a brother, a West India captain, who brought over some logs of this wood to pack the casks with which his ship was laden. As the Doctor was then building a house in King-Street, Covent-Garden, his brother thought they might be of use to him; but the carpenters finding the wood too hard for their tools, they were laid aside as useless. Soon after, Mrs. Gibbons wanting a candle-box, the Doctor called on his cabinet-maker to make him one of some wood that lay in his garden. Wollaston, the cabinet-maker, on cutting it up, also complained that it was too hard. The candle-box was, however, made, and approved of, insomuch that the Doctor insisted on having a bureau made of the same wood; which was done, when the fine colour and beautiful polish were so pleasing, that it became an object of curiosity, and attracted the attention of the Duchess of Buckingham, who brought the wood into fashion, made the fortune of Wollaston, and furniture of that sort became general.

I am indebted for this anecdote to "The Honduras Almanack," a little work which does infinite credit to the colony, both by its literary merits, and its elegant execution.

The season for cutting mahogany usually commences about the month of August. The gangs of labourers employed in this work consist of from twenty to fifty each; but few exceed the latter number. They are composed of slaves and free persons, without any comparative distinction of rank, and it very frequently

occurs that the conductor of such work is himself a slave. Each gang has also one person belonging to it, termed a huntsman —he is generally selected from the most intelligent of his fellows, and his occupation is to search the woods. Accordingly, about the beginning of August, he is dispatched on his important mission; and if his owner be employed on his own ground, this is seldom a work of much delay or difficulty. He cuts his way through the thickest of the forests to some elevated situation, and climbs the tallest tree he finds, from which he views the woods around him. At this season the leaves of the mahogany tree are always of a red hue, and an eye accustomed to this kind of exercise can, at a great distance, discern the places where the wood is most abundant. The expertness of his art is then displayed by his pursuing a direct course to the object of his search, without compass, or any other guide than his recollection of the features of the country. On some occasions, when searching the distant and unappropriated forests, no ordinary stratagem is necessary to prevent others from taking advantage of his previous discoveries; and if his steps be traced, his ingenuity is exerted to mislead his followers. But he is not always successful, for his rivals are as expert as himself, and their eyes so quick, that the lightest turn of a leaf, or the most faint impression of the foot, is unerringly perceived; even the dried foliage, which is strewed upon the earth, often helps to betray the concealed spot, and the disappointed huntsman finds himself outstripped. The hidden treasure being discovered, the next operation is the felling of a sufficient number of trees to employ the gang during the season. The tree is usually cut about ten or twelve feet from the ground, a stage being erected for the axe-men employed in levelling it. The trunk of the tree, from its dimensions, is deemed the most valuable; but for the purposes of ornamental workmanship, the limbs, or branches, or roots, are preferable, the grain of them being closer, and the veins more rich or variegated.

The elegant little work above quoted, details the operation of felling, dividing, and squaring the timbers; describes the vast labour of cutting roads through the trackless forests to drag the logs to the banks of the river; and explains the process of floating them down, a distance of two hundred miles, when, in the month of June, the periodical torrents raise the floods.—See the *Honduras Almanack* for the year 1827.

*Note* XXVI.—p. 144.

The expressive name of Scots is, in the Celtic language, equivalent to that of *Wanderer* or *Vagrant;* and the characteristic industry and success of the Caledonians in every part of the globe, but particularly in the West Indies, amply justifies the appellation, though not in the vulgar idiom. They still wander, work, and save, to return to "the land o' cakes," and enjoy there the honourable and hard-earned fruit of their distant labours. A different fate usually awaits the Irish adventurers.

The opposite extremes of savage and civilized life have been exemplified amidst the mountains of Caledonia; and the site of one of the first universities of Europe was once occupied by a race of cannibals, if we may credit the assertion of an historian whose veracity has not been questioned. "Cum ipse adolescentulus in Galliâ viderim Attacottos, gentem Britannicam, humanis vesci carnibus; et cum per silvas porcorum greges, et armentorum pecudumque reperiant, *pastorum* nates et feminarum papillas solere abscindere, et has solas ciborum delicias arbitrari."—(Jerom. tom. ii. p. 75.)

What might we not hope, then, from the vicissitudes of morals amongst the tribes of savages which now people our colonies, if, indeed, the experience of innumerable ages had not sunk the negro character far below that of the Attacottos!

*Note* XXVII.—p. 159.

In the year 1731, the West India merchants applied to Parliament for certain restrictions against the northern colonies; a measure then rendered necessary by the transfer of the French and Dutch colonial trade to the settlers in New England. That evil had, however, in the lapse of time and change of circumstances, corrected itself; and if Mr. Southey had taken the trouble to employ his reason, he might have spared his pen—(vol. ii. p. 423, Chronological History of the West Indies, by Captain Thomas Southey, Commander, Royal Navy, 3 vols. 1827)—a work evincing some knowledge of the Naval Chronicle, little labour, and less skill. The dull mass is not enlivened by a spark of philosophy or taste; and the gallant compiler from the Royal Gazette indulges his readers only with the fashionable criticism of acrimonious bigotry against the colonies. The principal authors on the West Indies, from Herrera and Sir William Young, down to Stephen and Mr. Brougham, are, however,

brought together, and duly seasoned with the *reports* of the missionary, Dr. Coke, the father of many a doubtful statement; and the candid labourer who wades through fifteen hundred pages, may easily discriminate between the genuine and the apocryphal. It is a work I am not ambitious either to censure or transcribe, or I could easily show that even its chronology is loose and inaccurate, and that Mr. Southey has supplied his dates, in many instances, not from the events themselves, but from those of the posterior publications which recorded them, and from whence he indiscriminately drew his materials. Captain Southey may be thought to have witnessed some of the transactions he records, but who will be witness for Captain Southey?

*Note* XXVIII.—p. 159.

"Governor Johnstone said that he had been informed that an extraordinary memorial from Jamaica had been received by ministers; that the contents were of the utmost importance; and desired to know the reason it had not been laid before the House. Lord North did not know there was any reason for laying it before the House. The petition was from the Assembly of the island, hastily agreed upon, just at the end of the session. Mr. Fox thought that was quite sufficient reason to force it upon his Lordship's notice; for it was his Lordship's practice to transact the most important business at the end of the session. Lord North said, if desired, it should be brought."—(*Parliamentary Debates.*)

"Jamaica, ss.

"To the King's most excellent Majesty in Council,

The humble Petition and Memorial of the Assembly of Jamaica.

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Assembly of Jamaica, having taken into our consideration the present critical state of the colonies, humbly approach the throne, to assure your Majesty of our most dutiful regard to your royal person and family, and our attachment to, and reliance on, our fellow-subjects in Great Britain, founded on the most solid and durable basis, the continued enjoyment of our personal rights, and the security of our properties.

"That, weak and feeble as this colony is, from its very small number of white inhabitants, and its peculiar situation, from the encumbrance of more than two hundred thousand slaves, it can-

not be supposed that we now intend, or ever could have intended, resistance to Great Britain.

"That this colony has never, by riots or other violent measures, opposed, or permitted an act of resistance against, any law imposed on us by Great Britain, though always truly sensible of our just rights, and of the pernicious consequences both to the parent and infant state, with which some of them must be attended; always relying, with the most implicit confidence, on the justice and paternal tenderness of your Majesty, even to the most feeble and distant of your subjects; and depending, that when your Majesty and your parliament should have maturely considered, and deliberated on, the claims of Great Britain and her colonies, every cause of dissatisfaction would be removed.

"That, justly alarmed with the approaching horrors of an unnatural contest between Great Britain and her colonies, in which the most dreadful calamities to this island, and the inevitable destruction of the small sugar colonies are involved, and excited by these apprehensions, as well as by our affection for our fellow-subjects, both in Great Britain and the colonies, we implore your Majesty's favourable reception of this our humble petition and memorial, as well on behalf of ourselves and our constituents, the good people of this island, as on behalf of all other your Majesty's subjects, the colonists of America, but especially those who labour at present under the heavy weight of your Majesty's displeasure, for whom we entreat to be admitted as humble suitors, that we may not, at so important a crisis, be wanting to contribute our sincere and well-meant (however small) endeavours, to heal those disorders which may otherwise terminate in the destruction of the empire.

"That, as we conceive it necessary, for this purpose, to enter into the different claims of Great Britain and her colonies, we beg leave to place it in the royal mind, as the first established principle of the constitution, that the people of England have a right to partake, and do partake, of the legislation of their country; and that no laws can affect them, but such as receive their assent, given by themselves or their representatives; and it follows, therefore, that no one part of your Majesty's English subjects either can, or ever could, legislate for any other part.

"That the settlers of the first colonies, but especially those of the elder colonies of North America, as well as the conquerors of this island, were a part of the English people, in every respect

equal to them, and possessed of every right and privilege at the time of their emigration, which the people of England were possessed of; and, irrefragably, to that great right of consenting to the laws which should bind them in all cases whatsoever; and who, emigrating at first in small numbers, when they might have been oppressed, such rights and privileges were constantly guaranteed by the crown to the emigrants and conquerors, to be held and enjoyed by them, in the places to which they emigrated, and were confirmed by many repeated solemn engagements, made public by proclamations, under the faith of which they did actually emigrate and conquer; that therefore the people of England had no rights, power, or privilege, to give to the emigrants, as these were at the time of their emigration possessed of all such rights equally with themselves.

"That the peers of England were possessed of very eminent and distinguished privileges in their own right, as a branch of legislature; a court of justice in the dernier resort, for all appeals from the people; and, in the first instance, for all causes instituted by the representatives of the people; but that it does not appear, that they ever considered themselves as acting in such capacites for the colonies; the peers having never, to this day, heard or determined the causes of the colonists in appeal, in which it ever was, and is their duty, to serve the subjects within the realm.

"That, from what has been said, it appears that the emigrants could receive nothing from either the peers or the people; the former being unable to communicate their privileges, and the latter on no more than an equal footing with themselves; but that, with the king it was far otherwise; the royal prerogative, as now annexed to and belonging to the crown, being totally independent of the people, who cannot invade, add too, or diminish it, nor restrain or invalidate those legal grants, which the prerogative hath a just right to give, and hath very liberally given, for the encouragement of colonization; to some colonies it granted almost all the royal powers of government, which they hold and enjoy at this day; but to none of them did it grant less, than to the first conquerors of this island; in whose favour it is declared, by a royal proclamation, 'that they shall have the same privileges, to all intents and purposes, as the free-born subjects of England.'

"That, to use the name or authority of the people of the

parent state, to take away or render ineffectual the legal grants of the crown to the colonists, is delusive, and destroys that confidence which the people have ever had, and ought to have, of the most solemn royal grants in their favour, and renders unstable and insecure those very rights and privileges which prompted their emigration.

"That your colonists and your petitioners, having the most implicit confidence in the royal faith, pledged to them in the most solemn manner by your predecessors, rested satisfied with their different portions of the royal grants; and having been bred, from their infancy, to venerate the name of parliament, a word still dear to the heart of every Briton, and considered as the palladium of liberty, and the great source from whence their own is derived, received the several acts of parliament of England and Great Britain, for the regulation of the trade of the colonies, as the salutary precautions of a prudent father, for the prosperity of a wide extended family; and, that in this light we receive them, without a thought of questioning the right, the whole tenor of our conduct will demonstrate, for above one hundred years. That though we received those regulations of trade from our fellow subjects of England and Great Britain, so advantageous to us, as colonists, as Englishmen, and Britons, we did not thereby confer on them a power of legislating for us, far less that of destroying us and our children, by divesting us of all rights and property.

"That, with reluctance, we have been drawn from the prosecution of our internal affairs, to behold with amazement a plan almost carried into execution, for enslaving the colonies, founded, as we conceive, on a claim of parliament to bind the colonists in all cases whatsoever.

"Your humble petitioners have, for several years, with deep and silent sorrow, lamented this unrestrained exercise of legislative power; still hoping, from the interposition of their sovereign, to avert the last and greatest of calamities, that of being reduced to an abject state of slavery, by having an arbitrary government established in the colonies; for the very attempting of which, a minister of your predecessors was impeached by a house of commons.

"With like sorrow do we find the Popish religion established by law, which by treaty was only to be tolerated.

"That the most essential rights of the colonists have been

invaded, and their property given and granted to your Majesty, by men not entitled to such a power.

" That the murder of the colonists hath been encouraged, by another act, disallowing and annulling their trials by juries of the vicinage; and that fleets and armies have been sent to enforce those dreadful laws.

" We, therefore, in this desperate extremity, most humbly beg leave to approach the throne, to declare to your majesty, that our fellow subjects in Great Britain, and consequently their representatives, the house of commons, have not a right, as we trust we have shown, to legislate for the colonies; and that your petitioners and the colonists, are not, nor ought to be, bound by any other laws, than such as they have themselves assented to, and not disallowed by your majesty.

" Your petitioners do therefore make this claim and demand from their sovereign, as guarantee of their just rights, on the faith and confidence of which they have settled, and continue to reside in these distant parts of the empire, that no laws shall be made, and attempted to be forced upon them, injurious to their rights as colonists, Englishmen, or Britons.

" That your petitioners, fully sensible of the great advantages that have arisen from the regulations of trade in general, prior to the year 1760, as well to Great Britain and her colonies, as to your petitioners in particular, and being anxiously desirous of increasing the good effects of these laws, as well as to remove an obstacle which is new in our government, and could not have existed on the principles of our constitution, as it hath arisen from colonization, we do declare for ourselves, and the good people of this island, that we freely consent to the operation of all such acts of the British parliament, as are limited to the regulation of our external commerce only, and the sole objects of which, are the mutual advantage of Great Britain and her colonies.

" We, your petitioners, do therefore beseech your majesty, that you will be pleased, as the common parent to your subjects, to become a mediator between your European and American subjects, and to consider the latter, however far removed from your royal presence, as equally entitled to your protection, and the benefits of the English constitution; the deprivation of which must dissolve that dependence on the parent state, which it is our glory to acknowledge, whilst enjoying those rights under her

protection; but, should this bond of union be ever destroyed, and the colonists reduced to consider themselves as tributaries to Britain, they must cease to venerate her as an affectionate parent.

"We beseech your majesty to believe, that it is our earnest prayer to Almighty Providence, to preserve your majesty in all happiness, prosperity, and honour, and that there never may be wanting one of your illustrious line, to transmit the blessings of our excellent constitution to the latest posterity, and to reign in the hearts of a loyal, a grateful, and an affectionate people."—*Journals of Assembly*, vol. vi., p. 569.

*Note* XXIX.—p. 165.

The autograph I have seen.—"Lewis Hutchinson—hanged in Spanish Town, Jamaica, on the sixteenth morning of March, in the year of *his* Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-three.—Aged forty years.

Their sentence, pride, and malice, I defy;
Despise their power, and, like a Roman, die."

From a negro, still alive, in the service of a lady residing near the spot described, which slave witnessed several of his murders, I gathered these circumstances,—a short record of which will also be found in the Annual Register.

*Note* XXX.—p. 171.

The following was the reply of Lord George Germain to this request for specie; in which the minister, with convenient blindness, pretends not to comprehend the advantages proposed, although he acknowledges that Jamaica was in want of a medium of trade. His charging the Assembly with injustice, was founded on a supposition that the balance of trade was against the island, which in fact it was not; and, perhaps, Jamaica was never more harshly treated by the ministers of the crown, than during this period of its forlorn distress.

"In regard to the requests of the assembly, stated in their address to the king, for permission to issue a paper currency, and that specie might be sent over for paying the troops, I confess I do not very well comprehend the advantage the assembly propose to derive from the grant of them. If there be an annual balance to be remitted from Jamaica to Great Britain, the pay of the troops must make part of that balance; and, if it

was sent out in specie, it would be returned in the same ship, and none could receive advantage from its transportation, but the commander of the ship that carried it.

"The drawing for it, therefore, answers exactly the same purpose; but, if the balance be in favour of Jamaica, specie must then be sent from hence to discharge it; and the pay-masters, not being able to find any one to take their bills, would of necessity require the specie to be sent out to them. Such is the case in the leeward islands at present; where large sums in specie are sent, as the expense of the troops now there is more than the commercial balance against those islands amounts to; but, when the troops are withdrawn, the specie will follow them: for no justifiable means, in my opinion, can be devised, for retaining specie in a country that owes a balance to another.

"I have, indeed, understood that the inhabitants of Jamaica are much in want of a medium of trade, or circulation of small denominations: and I should think a copper coinage, such as that some years ago given to Virginia, would be very useful to the soldiery and lower classes, and perhaps a silver coinage on a similar scale, might be obtained, if the legislature were desirous of it.

"What footing the assembly mean to put a paper currency upon, were the acts of parliament which stand in the way of such a scheme, repealed, does not appear from their address; and I am apt to imagine they have not fully considered it themselves. If they mean paper bills, that shall be a lawful tender in all payments, I am free to declare my opinion, that it never can or ought to be obtained. If it be only an issue, by way of anticipation of a public revenue, and compulsive upon none but the treasurer, to receive it in payment of the tax appropriated to sink it, and that tax sufficient for the purpose in the limited time, I am not aware of any act of parliament that prevents the issue of such a paper currency; and I can assure the assembly, that such a proposition, if they choose to make it, will meet with all the proper attention from the king's servants here. I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

"GEO. GERMAIN."

"Governor Dalling."

*Note* XXXI.—p. 172.

The country was flattered by the respectable testimony of the

Speaker of the House of Commons, who took this opportunity of presenting the Assembly of Jamaica with a copy of the Journals of Parliament, accompanied by an expression, "That, at a time when we were in danger of losing our colonies upon the continent, he thought we should take every opportunity of improving and strengthening the connexion between the mother country and her island colonies; that he thought this one of those opportunities which ought not to be lost, and he most readily embraced it, not only to testify his respect for the legislative body of Jamaica in particular, but his more enlarged opinion in regard to the island colonies in general."

*Note* XXXII.—p. 175.

Petitions from all parts of Jamaica poured into the Assembly representing the impropriety of sending upon foreign expeditions the strength required for its own protection: but General Dalling persisted in his offensive operations, and was severely censured for an act to which his share of booty lent some colour for the charge of venality. The unfortunate attack upon Saint Juan led to the suspension of some of the highest civil officers of Jamaica, and to the discussion of measures which were the only blot upon that governor's character.

The force sent on this expedition was thus constituted, (*see Journals*, vol. vii. p. 315,) and it shows the resources of the island.

| | |
|---|---|
| Regular troops on the island establishment, sent in the first embarkation, the 3d February, about . | 400 |
| In the second embarkation, the 12th April, about , | 235—635 |
| Besides a third detachment of regular troops, and a few of the royal artillery, of which the number has not been ascertained. | |
| Jamaica volunteers, in the first embarkation, of whom one hundred and sixty to one hundred and seventy were white inhabitants of the island, except a few lately arrived in the country . . . | 231 |
| Followed to the Spanish Main, with one Adams, all white men . . . . . | 27—258 |
| The rest of this corps consisted of people of colour, foreigners, and Indians: | |
| Carried forward . | 893 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Brought forward | 893 |
| The Jamaica legion was composed chiefly of privateers' men (under which description were included some people of colour, and a few inhabitants of the island). This corps, on being reviewed by Brigadier-General Campbell appeared to him a riotous, troublesome set of people . . . . . | 213 |
| The royal batteaux men, by Sir Alexander Leith's return, amounted to one hundred and six men, besides nineteen men sent to St. Juan before he went down. This corps consisted of much the same sort of people as the legion already described; by one account, they were in number about one hundred—by another . . . . . | 125 |
| Light-horse or dragoons, raised about the beginning of July, notwithstanding the address of the house to the governor some months before, for putting a stop to levies in the island, amounted to ninety-eight, but only fifty-eight of them appear to have been sent to the Main; they consisted of Curraçoa men, sailors, Italians, Portuguese, a few people of colour belonging to the island, and sixteen or eighteen white inhabitants, including officers . . | 98 |
| Artificers, such as carpenters, boat-builders, &c. about | 50 |
| | 1379 |

*Note* XXXIII.—p. 185.

The force is otherwise stated by Mr. Southey, but my authority is the letter of Sir George Rodney to the governor of Jamaica.

" *Formidable, Gros-Islet-Bay, St. Lucia.*

" SIR, *April* 3, 1782.

" I take the earliest opportunity to acquaint your excellency that the convoy from Great Britain are arrived at this island, with the 14th regiment; I have likewise the 69th regiment on board the fleet, both of which are destined for the protection of your island. The convoy from Cork are hourly expected, in which I am informed some regiments are embarked.

" The enemy's force in these seas are thirty-six sail of the line

and ten frigates; they keep themselves close in Fort-Royal bay, and seem to be near ready. You may depend upon my watching them, and, if they give me an opportunity, attacking them. Should they escape the attack in these parts, that great event must be decided in those seas near your island.

"The force of his majesty's fleet in these seas are thirty-eight sail of the line; all of which, you may be sure, shall come to the assistance of Jamaica.

"Should the enemy delay sailing, in order to deceive me, while (may be) Jamaica is attacked, I shall continue here but a short time, and proceed with all possible dispatch to prevent their designs taking place.

"I have the honour to be, with real respect, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

"G. B. RODNEY."

"P.S.—I have wrote to admiral Rowley to have his squadron ready to join me on my appearance off Jamaica. To attack them on their own coasts, or, if practicable, in their own ports, is the best way to prevent their insult on Jamaica."

Rodney thus modestly announced his victory to the anxious inhabitants of Jamaica, whom he had saved.—

"*Formidable, between Guadaloupe and Montserrat,*

"SIR, *April* 14, 1782.

"I am this moment favoured with your Excellency's letter, and have the honour to acquaint you, that after having had a partial engagement with the enemy on the 9th, wherein sixteen of my rear were prevented by calms from joining in the action, on the 12th I had the good fortune to bring them to a general action, which lasted from seven o'clock in the morning till half-past six in the afternoon, without one moment's intermission. Comte de Grasse, with the Ville de Paris, and four other ships of the line, and one sunk, graced the victory. The remainder of the fleet was so miserably shattered, and their loss in men so very great, from their having their whole army, consisting of five thousand five hundred men, on board the ships of war, that I am convinced it will be almost impossible to put them in a condition for service for some considerable time.

"I am hastening with my whole fleet for the succour of Jamaica; and you may hourly expect me, with such ships of my

fleet as are in a condition to keep the sea, off the east end of your island. Not a few will be obliged to repair to Port-Royal.

"I have the honour to be,

"With the highest regard, Sir,

"Your most obedient and most humble servant,

"G. B. RODNEY.

"His Excellency General Campbell."

*Note* XXXIV.—p. 188.

Without losing myself in a labyrinth of names and species I do not understand, the *mangifera Indica*, or mango; the *laurus cinnamomum*, cinnamon; the *garcinia cornea*, mangostein; the *spondias*, South-Sea plums, were amongst the many, now become common in Jamaica.

*Note* XXXV.—p. 189.

Lord Rodney thus expressed his thanks to the Assembly of Jamaica:—

"SIR, "*Portman-Square, 9th March*, 1784.

"Stephen Fuller, Esq., agent for your island, having acquainted me that the House of Assembly, of his Majesty's most important island of Jamaica, had resolved to do me the very high honour of erecting a marble statue of me; it is impossible for me not to be highly sensible of the most honourable compliment which they have paid me. I must, therefore, Sir, beg you will be so obliging as to return them my most sincere thanks for this mark of their kind attention to me, sensible that my poor services are over-rated by their partial regard to my person.

"I did, Mr. Speaker, no more than my duty. The preservation of Jamaica was always at my heart, as I ever did, and ever shall, look upon it as the brightest jewel in the British diadem; and if I had any share in preserving it, I shall regard it, with heartfelt satisfaction, as the happiest era of my life.

"And that Jamaica may ever flourish with happiness and security, is the most sincere wish of him,

"Who has the honour to be,

"With the highest respect, Sir,

"Your most obedient and most humble servant,

"RODNEY.

"The Hon. Speaker of the House of Assembly, Jamaica."

*Note* XXXVI.—p. 193.

The only reply to this strong appeal, was the following passage, in a letter from Lord Sydney to the Lieutenant-Governor:

"You will do right to intimate to the assembly of the island, that however well inclined his Majesty's ministers may be to promote the prosperity of the island, they cannot support or countenance the present application, without material injury to the commercial interests of this country."

*Note* XXXVII.—p. 196.

Mr. Barham asserts, that, in the year 1765, the Assembly of Jamaica brought in a bill, for limiting the importation of slaves, which was stopped in its progress by the Governor, who sent for the Assembly, and told them that, consistently with his instructions, he could not give his consent.

Upon this record of Mr. Barham's pen, his commentator, Mr. Southey, wisely observes:—"Mr. Barham has probably made a mistake in his date. If the Governor's salary depended upon the importation duties upon slaves, *from the previous conduct of the Assembly*, it would not be difficult to guess at their motive for wishing to limit the importation for a time. The salaries of all the Governors ought to be independent of the Assemblies."—*Chron. Hist.* vol. ii., p. 384. It is difficult to say, whether Mr. Barham's error, or Mr. Southey's malevolence, be most conspicuous in this passage. "The previous conduct of the Assembly," to which Mr. Southey so obscurely alludes, was no other than the discussion of those acts of Governor Lyttleton, which led to his removal, and ended in his impeachment and disgrace; and though Mr. Southey eagerly catches at the idea of the Assembly's venality, in attempting to punish the Governor, by restricting the importation of slaves, he is there as singularly unfortunate as in all his other speculations; for the Governor's salary *did not* depend upon the duties on the negro traffic.

Again, under the date 1775, Mr. Southey asserts, that the Legislature of Jamaica "passed two bills to restrict the trade in slaves." Now, the simple fact is this:—The Assembly of Jamaica never petitioned to have the slave-trade restricted; but in the year 1773 an act was passed, laying an additional duty on slaves imported; which, being its first interference, gave great

offence to the slave merchants of Bristol and Liverpool, and they petitioned against such an implied restriction.

Two years afterwards a Committee of the Assembly came to this resolution:—That, "It appears, from the account of slaves, imported into this island, and laid before the house by the receiver-general, that, within the two last years, more slaves were brought from the coast of Africa to this island, than were ever known in any two years before, and the greatest part thereof sold in this island, at much greater prices than usual, notwithstanding they were subject to the duties so highly complained of by the African merchants in England; and therefore, it is the opinion of this committee that it be recommended to the house, that the committee of correspondence do forthwith write to the agent, setting forth at large the truth relative to the slave-trade in this island, for the last ten years, sending him a copy of the said account now before the house; and directing him to lay the whole matter, by way of a memorial, before the lords of trade, shewing their lordships how much they have been imposed upon by the Guinea merchants and factors in England, to the hurt and prejudice of this island."

The agent for the island, in consequence of his instructions, did lay a memorial upon the subject before the board of trade, and that board, through its president, the Earl of Dartmouth, answered by a declaration to this effect: "We cannot allow the colonies to check, or discourage in any degree, a traffic so beneficial to the nation."—The candid reader will be satisfied with the elaborate report of the slave laws of Jamaica, as they existed in the year 1788: which he will find in the Journals of the Assembly, vol. viii. p. 427.

The following is a brief record of the incipient labours of those who commenced, and finally succeeded in the abolition of the slave-trade.

"26th February, 1793.—Mr. Wilberforce moved that the house should, on Thursday next, resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, to consider the circumstances of the African trade; which was opposed by Sir William Young, who moved an amendment, '*that this day six months*' be inserted in the place of '*Thursday next;*' which was carried, 61 to 53.

"24th May, 1793.—Mr. Wilberforce submitted two motions to the house of Commons; one for abolishing the trade for supplying foreign territories with slaves, which he carried by a majority of 7: the other for limiting and regulating the impor-

tation of slaves into the British colonies, for a time to be limited, he lost by a majority of 10.

" 8th February, 1794.—Mr. Wilberforce moved for leave to bring in a bill for preventing the supply of foreign territories with slaves from the coast of Africa, in British vessels; which was carried by a majority of 23.

" 5th May, 1794.—Lord Grenville moved the house of Lords to postpone the second reading of the bill to prevent the supplying foreigners with slaves, to the 1st of September; which was carried.

" 28th February, 1795.—Mr. Wilberforce moved for leave to bring in a bill for an abolition of the African slave-trade, at a time to be limited; which was put off for six months by a majority of 17.

" 3d March, 1796.—A bill for abolishing the slave-trade was read a second time: Majority 64 to 31.

" 5th May, 1796.—This bill was rejected.

" 6th April, 1797.—Mr. Charles Ellis made a motion respecting the slave-trade, and the negroes in the West India colonies; which was taken into consideration by the house of assembly, on the 21st of December in that year.

" 15th May, 1797.—Mr. Wilberforce moved for leave to bring in a bill to abolish the slave-trade, which was negatived: noes 82 to 74.

" 2d April, 1798.—Mr. Wilberforce made a motion for abolishing the slave-trade, at a time to be limited, which was negatived; noes 87 against 82.

" 8th June, 1798.—Slave carrying bill is past, in the same form it was in the preceding year.

" 1st March, 1799.—Mr. Wilberforce moved the Commons for abolishing the slave-trade, at a time to be limited; which was negatived; ayes, 54; noes, 84.

" June, 1799.—A bill passed the Commons for prohibiting the slave-trade, on the coast of Africa, within certain limits, (Mr. Thornton's bill.)

5th July, 1799.—The House of Lords reject Mr. Thornton's bill; ayes, 32; noes, 25; proxies on each side, 36.

" 10th July, 1799.—The House of Lords made an order, on motion of Lord Grenville, for the production of log-books of vessels carrying on the slave-trade to the coast of Africa.

" 11th July, 1799.—Mr. Pitt gave notice in the House of

Commons of his intention to bring forward some propositions, relative to the slave-trade, which he considered to be essentially necessary to the safety of the British West-India colonies."

## *Note.* XXXVIII.—p. 219.

The botanical reader may, perhaps, desire to know more with respect to this interesting event; my ignorance is informed by the journals of the Assembly, in which are recorded the following lists, with the letter of Captain Bligh: and from the paths of blood I cannot refuse to turn aside to gather some flowers of science.

| | Kind of Plants. | Plants landed at | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Port-Henderson for Middlesex. | Greenwich, for Surrey & gen. depôt. | Port-Morant, for Surrey & gen. depôt. | Savanna-la Mar, Cornwall. |
| Otaheite. | Bread-fruit | 84 | 75 | 105 | 83 |
| | Rattah | 5 | 9 | 14 | 5 |
| | Ayyah | 6 | 18 | 10 | 7 |
| | Av-vee, or vee | 0 | 3 | 7 | 0 |
| | Oraiah | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Vai-hee | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Pecah | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| | Cocoa-nut | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Ettow / Mattee } red dye | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| | | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Possession Island, New-Guinea.— | | | | | |
| | Sao, or sow, kind of plum | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Bread-fruit which bears seed | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Timor. | Mango | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| | Jamblang | 0 | 7 | 8 | 0 |
| | Jambo-iremavah | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| | Jambo ma-ree | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 |
| | Blimbing | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Chermailah | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Cosambec | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Nanka | 10 | 14 | 23 | 10 |
| | Namnam | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | Pomegranates | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | Seeree-hoah | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | ——— down | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Peenang, or betel-nut | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| | Bintaloo | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Bugh-naah kanang-ah | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | Tick-wood plant, or jattee | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | Vessels containing young plants of nam-nam, nanka, and others } 5 pots | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 |
| Saint Helena. | China orange | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Dwarf peach | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | Almonds | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| | Coffee | 1 | 2 | 2 | |
| | Total | 110 | 137 | 265 | 109 |

" Sir, *Providence, at Port Royal, April* 1, 1793.

" I have the pleasure to inform you that, in pursuance of the directions from the committee appointed by the honourable house of assembly to receive and distribute the bread-fruit and other plants, they have been all landed from his Majesty's ship under my command, in perfect health and condition.

" It is a happiness to me that I have succeeded in the expedition I had zealously undertaken; and I consider it a peculiar honour to congratulate the honourable assembly on this event, replete with the advantages our most gracious king intended for his subjects in this country.

" The respect I have for the honourable assembly induces me to send to you a copy of the list of plants, as they were landed at different places, transmitted to the chairman of the committee, for which I have some time since requested a receipt for the whole, as a public document to lay before the lords commissioners of the admiralty.

" With the most sincere wishes for the prosperity of the island of Jamaica, and warmest attachment, I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient, and very humble servant,

" William Bligh.

"To the Honourable Samuel Williams Haughton, Esq."

In return for this act of royal consideration, a collection of nearly six hundred plants was made in the vicinity of Kingston, and in the mountains of Liguanea, and presented to the gardens of Kew. The voluminous catalogue is inserted in the Journals of Assembly, vol. ix. p. 250. The science of botany in Jamaica afterwards received great assistance from the laborious pen of Mr. Lunan, who published the ' Hortus Jamaicensis,' and more recently, from the active exertions of an eminent physician, the founder and president of the " Horticultural Society of Jamaica," in which character the talents of Dr. E. N. Bancroft are calculated most eminently to secure a lasting benefit to his adopted country. The library of the institution has already been enriched with some valuable MSS. by the liberality of Mr. Aikman, senior, whose exertions in favour of the colony have been unremitted for more than forty years.

In the tenth volume of the journals of the Jamaica assembly, p. 70, may be read a curious paper on the successful culture of the clove-tree, in the island of Dominica. It is well worthy of

attention, as introducing a new branch of trade. Other botanical references will be found in p. 667 of the same volume.

*Note* XXXIX.—p. 233.

Mr. Dallas is not to be forgiven for lending his pen, without better grounds, to give some colour to such a report: and his mysterious *latinity*, " inter costas ducis repertum est ipsius cranium," is absurd, even if it were true. The peace of many families suffered by this ill-judged amplification. The relatives of Colonel Gallimore, whose body was never found, but whose gun was, long endured the painful suspicion that he was the victim of barbarous tortures, perhaps of hopeless confinement amongst the savages, who exulted over his fate. However, it has since been ascertained beyond a doubt, that the worst which happened to the fallen, was the agony of an helpless death.

One anecdote is detailed upon better grounds, and it is a striking one: A soldier on his way through the deserted town, perceived a book upon the ground, amidst the ruins of a smoking hut; it was a copy of Wake's catechism, and he hastily thrust it into his bosom. He shortly afterwards received a ball which must have been buried in his heart, had not two hunded pages of the volume arrested its progress, almost upon the last leaf.

*Note* XL.—p. 237.

These hounds are very similar to those of Mont St. Bernard, in the Alps; and are so trained as to pursue, but not to injure, the object of their search. When they overtake a fugitive, they make the woods echo with their hideous yell, guard him with a watchful eye, but touch him not, unless he attempt to move, or resist. The following is an instance of their services in Cuba:— A fleet from Jamaica, passing through the Gulf of Mexico, beat up on the north side of Cuba, when one of the ships, which was manned chiefly by Spanish renegadoes, was purposely run ashore by her piratical crew. All the British sailors on board were instantly murdered, and the assassins retired with their booty to the mountains, intending to penetrate through the woods to some remote settlements on the south side, where they hoped to secure their treasure, and elude pursuit. Early intelligence of the crime had, however, been conveyed to the Havanna, and the murderers were pursued by a detachment of the

Chasseurs del Rey, with their hounds. In a few days they were all brought in, and executed; *but not one of them was hurt by the dogs which captured them.* The head, and right arm, of each criminal were suspended in frames, like cages, and long remained on conspicuous parts of the coast which had been the scene of their cruel deeds.

*Note* XLI.—p. 240.

The correspondence between General Walpole, and the Lieutenant-Governor proves the intemperance of the latter, and is a sufficient vindication of the conduct of the former. It is to be read at length in the ninth volume of the Journals, and if it had been rendered less necessary by the immediate presence of the Earl, who wrote from a distance of only two or three miles, the General would have been relieved from a responsibility which greatly retarded the desired object, and has cast a shade upon the good faith of Jamaica.

" *Dromilly, Thursday, 28th January,* 1796.

" DEAR SIR,

" My sentiments are long ago made up upon this business: Smith's application to-day, and their proposal since to go out without the dogs, all convince me that we have not a moment to lose,

" The best and most agreeable news that could possibly reach me to-morrow forenoon, would be to hear that all the maroons were secured, and marched off to Montego-Bay; and, in my letters home, I have absolutely reported that we had secured them; of course, I must be on thorns until that moment arrives.

" Yours sincerely,

" BALCARRES."

" Hon. Major-General Walpole."

" *Old Maroon-Town, January 29th,* 1796.

" MY LORD,

" In obedience to your lordship's orders, received this morning, I have sent the maroons down to Montego-Bay.

" I cannot but lament that the opportunity (as far as I am capable of judging) of bringing in those at present out, should be thus lost. Positive I am, that, had your lordship had the same opportunity of judging *on the spot* that I have, you would have been of the same opinion, and the war probably terminated.

"From the information which I received from Smith, there seems to be but little chance of any but a maroon discovering a maroon, whenever these people are where they can remain quiet for any time. Dogs cannot scent, but on a recent step; and I fear that the maroons are now so deep in the woods, that no expedition can be supported against them, without risking a failure of food and water for those animals; with a great probability, even if it could be sustained, of never finding the enemy. Had we accompanied Smith, we should, if they had not been induced to surrender, at all events have discovered where they were, and then could have pursued them. The die is cast, and it is now too late, unless they discover themselves; for I am told that the Spaniards say, that they could live in *these woods* for ever; that they never saw such woods for sustenance any where.

"Your lordship will be so good as to let me have your orders; but I could wish that nothing should be left to my discretion.

"I have the honour to be your lordship's most faithful and obedient, G. WALPOLE."

"MR. SPEAKER, "*April 29th*, 1796.

"I am honoured with your letter of the 22d of April, inclosing to me a resolution of the house of assembly, that the receiver-general do remit to the agent of the island the sum of five hundred guineas, for the purpose of purchasing a sword to be presented to me, as a testimony which the house entertains of my important services and distinguished merit in the suppression of the late rebellion of the maroons of Trelawney Town.

"Perhaps, Sir, not any person has ever been placed in a predicament more unpleasant than that in which I am at this moment; but, as the house has thought fit not to accede to the agreement entered into between me and the Trelawney maroons, and as their opinion of that treaty stands on their minutes very different to my conception of it, I am compelled to decline the honour which they have intended for me; but I must beg of you to assure the house, that not any person would receive their favours with more gratitude than I should, could I possibly do it with credit to myself.

"I have the honour to be your very obedient and faithful servant, G. WALPOLE."

"The Honourable Speaker of the Assembly of Jamaica."

*Note* XLII.—p. 252.

It has been asserted, that till within the last twenty years religious instruction had never been contemplated *for the slaves;* and that until the appointment of the present ecclesiastical establishment, there were scarcely any clergy in the island of Jamaica.

The following retrospective report of the House of Assembly, in the year 1797, will effectually contradict one assertion, and the subsequent pages of this history will show what may have been the increase boasted of in the other.

"The Committee to whom the petition of the clergy of Jamaica was referred, reported,

"That they had taken the same into their consideration, and, in order to enable them to make a full and perfect report to the house, of the situation of the clergy of the island in general, had perused the several laws, which have, at different times, been passed relative to their establishment, and find,

"That, by 11th section of 33d Charles II., chap. 18th, it is provided, that no ecclesiastical law or jurisdiction shall have power, in any case whatsoever, to inflict any penal mulcts or punishments:

"That, by the 2d section of 21st George II., chap. 6th, without repealing the above provision in a direct manner, the bishop of London is invested with the exercise of ordinary jurisdiction in this island, as far as the same appertains to the ecclesiastical regimen of the clergy only, but not with authority in respect to the presentation or induction to any of the churches or parishes in this island:

"That the committee observe that no ecclesiastical jurisdiction has ever been exercised by any deputation or authority from the bishop of London; and they are of opinion that, in future, the exercise of ordinary jurisdiction in this island, appertaining to the ecclesiastical regimen of the clergy, shall be vested in the governor or commander-in-chief for the time being:

"That, in the year 1661, the island was divided into fifteen parishes:

"And that the committee find, that, by the 9th section of the aforesaid act of 33d Charles II., it was enacted, that the rector of the parish of Port Royal should be allowed 250*l.* per annum; the rector of the parish of St. Catherine not less than 140*l.*; the

rectors of the parishes of St. Thomas, St. Andrew, and St. John, 100*l.* per annum each; and the rectors of the other parishes in the island not less than 80*l.* per annum, severally; and which said annual stipends were to be paid by the parishes to their rectors respectively, for their support and maintenance, and were made payable at the dwelling-house of each such rector, by equal portions, every six months, without any charge or defalcation; and it was provided, that none should be capable of being presented to the said benefices, or of receiving the profits of the same, unless they should produce due testimonials of their being qualified, according to the canons of the church of England, by having taken deacon's and priest's orders, and which said testimonials should be recorded in the secretary's office:

"That, by the 5th Ann, chap. 1st, the justices and vestries of the several parishes were allowed, if they thought fit, to increase the annual stipends to their rectors, in the following manner:—The stipend to the rector of the parish of St. Catherine to 250*l.* per annum; to the rectors of the parishes of St. Thomas in the Vale, St. Dorothy, Kingston, Vere, and Clarendon, to 200*l.* per annum each; and the stipends to the rectors of the several parishes, except Port Royal, to 150*l.* per annum; and which increase was granted for the encouragement of learned and pious men to come and reside in the several parishes of this island; and the stipend to the rector of the parish of Port Royal was reduced to 150*l.* per annum, which reduction was made in consequence of the great decrease of population and wealth in the said parish:

"That, by the 21st George II., chap. 6th, all discretionary power, which had been granted to the justices and vestries by the aforesaid regulation, was taken away, and the annual stipends to the rectors of the several parishes settled thus:

| | Currency per ann. | | Currency per ann. |
|---|---|---|---|
| To the Rector of St. Catherine | £300 | To the Rector of St. David | £100 |
| St. Thomas in the Vale | 200 | St. George | 100 |
| St. Dorothy | 200 | St. Mary | 200 |
| Kingston | 250 | St. Ann | 200 |
| Vere | 200 | St. James | 200 |
| Clarendon | 250 | St. Elizabeth | 200 |
| Port Royal | 200 | Westmorland | 250 |
| St. Andrew | 200 | Hanover | 200 |
| St. John | 200 | Portland | 100 |
| St. Thomas in the East | 250 | | |

" And, by the 14th George III., chap. 31st, for dividing the parish of St. James into two parishes, the rector of the new parish, Trelawney, was allowed an annual stipend of £200 currency, and was made subject to the like penalties and regulations as the rectors of the several other parishes in this island were or should be:

" And which said several annual stipends were made payable, in equal portions, every six months, to the rectors of the several parishes, by the churchwardens of each respective parish; and, by the said act of 21st George II., the justices and vestries were restrained from making any addition to the stipends then settled:

" That the Committee further find, that, by the 30th George III., chap. 13th, an addition was made to the annual stipends of the rectors of the several parishes in which churches had been erected, in the following proportions:—

| | Currency per ann. | | Currency per ann. |
|---|---|---|---|
| St. Catherine | £70 | St. James | £50 |
| Kingston | 110 | Hanover | 50 |
| Port Royal | 30 | St. Elizabeth | 50 |
| St. Andrew | 50 | Clarendon | 30 |
| St. Thomas in the East | 50 | St. Dorothy | 20 |
| Portland | 20 | Vere | 30 |
| St. Ann | 50 | St. Thomas in the Vale | 30 |

" And it was by the said act provided, that the sum of 30*l.* should be added to the annual stipends of the rectors of the several other parishes in this island, as soon as churches should be erected within them respectively; and which several additions were in lieu and compensation of certain fees, theretofore customarily paid to the rectors, for permission to open the ground for the interment of the dead, within the churches of this island, the practice of which the said act was meant to prohibit, by imposing a penalty of 500*l.* on any rector for each contravention thereof; and the said several sums were to be raised and paid in the same manner as the aforesaid annual stipends were directed to be raised and paid:

" That the committee must observe, that, by the aforesaid regulation of the annual stipends, those to the rectors of certain parishes were increased, and others lessened; and they beg leave to represent to the house that the aforesaid regulations are subject to two considerable evils: First, in making the rectors in some measure dependent on the churchwardens for payment of

their stipends; and secondly, by obliging each parish to pay the stipend to its rector, the small parishes are oppressed, as the tax to be assessed for the purpose falls heavy on their few inhabitants. To obviate which, your committee recommend to the house to place the stipends of the clergy throughout the island on an equal establishment, to be paid quarterly to their order, by the receiver-general for the time being, out of any public monies in his hands; subject, however, to a certain deduction, for a particular purpose, immediately to be stated by the committee:

"That they beg leave to observe, that they find no fund has ever been established in this island, or provision made, for the support of the widows and orphans of such clergymen of the island as should die; and as they conceive the establishment of such a fund would be a very great inducement to clergymen with families to come over to this island, and from whom, on every rational principle, might be expected the more perfect performance of moral and religious duties and examples, they strongly recommend to the house to adopt a plan, whereby the receiver-general shall be authorized and required to retain 10 per cent. on the stipends to be allowed, under the aforesaid recommendation of the committee, to the clergy; the same to be vested in the commissioners of public accounts for the time being, to be by them lent to the public, the interest of which accumulating fund your committee are fully persuaded will, after the expiration of a few years, be ample provision for the support and maintenance of the widows and orphans of the Jamaica clergy:

"That the committee observe that in 1681 a discretionary power was vested by law in the justices and vestries, for laying a reasonable tax within their several parishes, for erecting churches, and repairing such as are made, and making convenient seats in them; and the said justices and vestries are respectively subjected to a penalty of 5*l.* currency, for a neglect of their duty therein; but nothing is mentioned in respect to building a dwelling-house for the rector, or establishing a burial-ground; however, in 1773, certain commissioners in each parish are appointed for raising a sum not exceeding five thousand pounds, to be by them applied towards purchasing land sufficient for erecting a church, for a burial-ground, and for a parsonage-house; but, in the act appointing those commissioners, no compulsory clause is contained to enforce obedience to the aforesaid purposes of the act:

"That the committee are of opinion, that it is highly fit and proper, for the more regular and general performance of divine worship, that a church should be erected in every parish throughout the island, and that there should also be a parsonage-house, and a burial-ground; but, as many parishes have not the means of establishing those buildings, they ought to be assisted by the public:

"That it may be superfluous to observe to the house, that nothing can be more conducive to the preservation of the morals of the people, and have a greater tendency to the general establishment of virtue, than religious instruction in the principles and doctrines of the Christian religion; and the committee recur to such observation only as the ground to recommend strongly their opinion that, in consideration of the addition to be made to the stipends of the clergy, they should be made *compellable* to instruct all such free persons of colour and slaves who may be willing to be baptized, and informed in the tenets of the Christian religion, in its principles and doctrines."—*Journals*, vol. x. p. 62.

Upon this report, the arrangement was made to which this note refers.

*Note* XLIII.—p. 269.

"I got once into a corner where they could not see me, and was astonished at their eloquence *and unction*"—that is, of the negro women of Saint John's, Antigua. "Their abilities far exceed those of most women I have heard speak or pray *in England.*" The ladies of "The Crown and Anchor" will, no doubt, make THE DOCTOR a low curtsey.

"The number of members in the methodist society in Jamaica amount to nearly 600 (A.D. 1801). The societies might probably be multiplied by six" (a brief reckoning) "to give the amount of all the regular congregations. There were also nine local preachers, either blacks or people of colour, *admirably adapted to the work.*"

"The utility of missionaries" (in St. Vincent's) "became visible in the eyes of the planters; and, in many cases, interest supplied the place of better motives." This is rational and charitable.

"One of *our* people said 'It is of my Saviour's mercy that my life is preserved:'—and, indeed, the divine mercy was signal in her behalf, for her neighbour's house was swept away, while

hers was left standing:" no doubt because she was one of "our" people, and her neighbour was attached to the Established Church, when this flood happened in St. Christopher's.

A lamentable enumeration of the peculiar hardships and persecutions opposed to these men of evangelical preference, is thus closed by the inimitable Doctor Coke, in his dregs and rincings of the human intellect: "We have had scarcely any rain for five months, and I am obliged to ride three miles—*to get water for my horse.*"

"The persecution we have met with in this place" (Jamaica) "far, very far, exceeds all the persecutions we have met with in the other islands, unitedly considered. Mr. Hammet's life was frequently endangered. Mr. Bull several times narrowly escaped being stoned to death." In another place, the Doctor says, he "had a numerous audience, but some of them *were very rude.*"—"During the height of the noise, I felt a spirit which I think I never felt before—I believe it was a spark of the true spirit of martyrdom."

Can this base coin pass current even amongst the most credulous? I confess that I have never seen Dr. Coke's book, but quote it *apud* his admirer Captain Thomas Southey, R.N.

*Note* XLIV.—p. 272.

The Diamond rock is six hundred feet high, scarcely a mile in circumference, and rises out of the ocean within a mile of the shores of Martinique. The south side is perpendicular as a wall; the east side is also inaccessible, with an overhanging cave about three hundred yards in height; and on the south-west side are likewise caves of great depth and magnitude. The west side has breakers running into the sea, where alone a landing can be effected, though under circumstances of great difficulty and danger. On the north-west side there is a sloping shore enlivened by a grove of fig-trees, and crowned by an enormous grotto, which the captain of the new fortification arranged for his residence. In the front of the slope, projecting into the sea, was formed a commanding battery, where a twenty-four pound gun ranged over the whole bay, and from whence a covered way led to another fronting the north-east. Between the two batteries a rope ladder was affixed to the perpendicular rock by which the garrison had access to another gun; whence they could climb through shrubs and crags to the summit, where

two long cannon protected the English flag. The process by which these guns were elevated to their aerial positions was arduous and ingenious. A large ship was brought close beneath the rock, and a cable was fastened to its summit, serving as a stay upon which the gun was raised on *travellers* by mechanical power. Commodore, afterwards Sir Samuel Hood, was so delighted with this his favourite fortification, that he was good-humouredly caricatured as sitting astride the rock, with carronades for spurs. The isle is supplied with rabbits, goats, lizards, birds, and a great variety of curious insects; but its springs being all medicinal, tanks are indispensable.

This rock was lost, in the following year, to the combined squadrons of France, and a force of three thousand troops; but not until a gallant resistance had expended all the water and ammunition in the garrison.

*Note* XLV.—p. 298.

It is curious to trace the origin and singular revolutions of the word *pagan*, which, in its worst sense, is still too correctly applicable to the slaves in Jamaica. The word παγη, in the Doric dialect, signified merely *a fountain*, and the inhabitants of the rural neighbourhood who might frequent such fountains, soon obtained the appellation of *pagans*. By an easy extension of the word, *pagan* and *rural* became synonymous terms; and the meaner rustics acquired that name which has been corrupted into peasants in the modern languages of Europe. The amazing increase of the military order introduced the necessity of a correlative term; and all the people, who were not enlisted in the service of the prince, were branded with the opprobrious epithet of pagans. The Christians were the soldiers of Christ; and their adversaries, who refused his sacrament, the oath of baptism, received the metaphorical name of pagans. But when Christianity had filled the cities of the Roman world, the old religion of polytheism etired, and languished in obscure villages; and then the word *pagan* reverted to its primitive signification, and the vacant title has since been applied to all the idolaters of the two hemispheres. It has been bestowed even on the Mahometans; and the purest Unitarians are branded by the Latin Christians with the unjust reproach of idolatry and paganism. How extensively, then, might it be applied to the Christian sects of the present day!

The word *barbarous*, if we trace its history, is, in every sense, applicable to the natives of Africa generally, though it has settled as a local denomination only along the northern coast of that vast continent. In the time of Homer, when the Greeks and Asiatics might be supposed to use a common idiom, the imitative sound of *barbar* was applied to the ruder tribes, whose pronunciation was most harsh, or whose grammar was most defective. From the time of Herodotus it was extended to all nations who were strangers to the language and manners of the Greeks. In the age of Plautus, the Romans themselves submitted to the insult, and freely assumed the name of *barbarians*. They soon claimed, however, an exemption for Italy, and her subject provinces; and at length removed the disgraceful appellation to the savage or hostile nations beyond the pale of the empire. The *Berbers* still exist in the interior provinces of Africa, and we may, perhaps, possess their genuine blood in Jamaica.

*Note* XLVI.—p. 336.

Captain Southey's wit is sometimes intolerable. He thus slyly quotes from the pious effusions of the Missionary Doctor, whose religion was so extremely pure and spiritual,—every where but in Jamaica. "Perhaps it is well for the Methodists that they never had any Right Reverend, Right Honourable, or Most Noble patrons; as they are now brought back to the state of the primitive church when religion stood upon its own bottom. It is not patronage, IT IS NOT MONEY, it is not titles, but genuine grace, holy zeal, and primitive simplicity, that must support and promote the work of God:"—language far more expressive of the author's passions than of the truth of facts. I could name a disciple of Doctor Coke's, still resident in Jamaica, who was publicly convicted of extorting money from his congregation of slaves, to build, *as he affirmed*, a chapel in New Zealand. "Those who have corn or poultry," said he, "must bring them to the Lord's steward, he will turn them into money:—and *as to the younger part of my female hearers, they have means of getting money which nature herself has suggested to them already.*" Such is the bad taste of Captain Southey, that it is not easy to distinguish his facts from his metaphors,—but such language as this cannot be mistaken.

*Note* XLVII.—p. 340.

"Nostre monde vient d'en trouver un autre (et qui nous respond si c'est le dernier de ses freres, puisque les Demons, les Sybilles, et nous, avons ignoré celuy-cy jusqu'a cette heure) non moins grand, plain, et membre que luy; toutes fois si nouveau, et si enfant, qu'on luy apprend encore son A. B. C. Il n'y a pas cinquante ans qu'il ne sçavoit ny lettres, ny poids, ny mesure, ny bleds, ny vignes. Il estoit encore tout nud au giron, et ne vivoit que de moyens de sa mere nourrice. Si nous concluons bien de nostre fin, et ce poete (Lucretius) de la jeunesse de son siecle, cet autre monde ne fera qu'entrer en lumiere quand le nostre en sortira." (*Essais de* MONTAIGNE, liv. iii. p. 674. Paris edit. 1657.)

*Note* XLVIII.—p. 347.

It was to prevent such prejudice as that complained of, that the Roman law ordained, "ut nulli patriæ suæ administratio sine speciali principis permissu permittatur." The Pandects and the Theodosian code went so far as to prohibit the chief magistrate of a province from purchasing slaves within his own jurisdiction, and even forbade his marrying a native or inhabitant.

*Note* XLIX.—p. 350.

The report of the committee, appointed by the assembly in the year 1825, to inquire into the management of the Kirk, is so creditable to the sister establishment of our church here, that I shall be pardoned for inserting it.

"A part of the committee visited the establishment, and, after hearing Divine service, were witnesses of the examination of the scholars of the Sunday-school, and were highly gratified at the discipline and regularity with which it was conducted, and the great progress that had been made in the education of all classes of the scholars, very honourable to the exertions of the reverend Mr. Wordie:

"The school was first established during the past year, and in the short period which has since elapsed, the number of children has gradually increased from seventy-two to three hundred and twenty, an increase which must afford satisfaction, as it at once furnishes a proof of the estimation in which the school is held, and of the desire for religious instruction which prevails among

the poorer classes of people in the city of Kingston. It is also satisfactory to consider the gratifying conviction it affords of the diligence, steadiness, and zeal of the different teachers initiated by Mr. Wordie:

" The only funds for the support of the establishment are the annual sum of £321 currency, being the interest of a sum of money lodged in the public chest of this island, and a small rent upon the pews: It possesses no means for the occasional repair of the buildings:

" Upon the whole, the committee are of opinion that, without public support, this valuable institution will be lost; that it ought to be encouraged and upheld, and recommend that a bill should be brought in to grant to its officiating minister for the time being a permanent salary or stipend."

*Note* L.—p. 359.

The agricultural report of the house of assembly, drawn by the masterly hand of Mr. Barrett, thus explains this important fact. " One day's labour in Hindostan will not give more of human subsistence, nor more sugar, than one day's labour in Jamaica, therefore there must be some other cause to account for the difference in the value of labour in the two countries. The circulating medium in India bears no proportion to what is required in Great Britain. This need no other proof than the fact of sixteen millions sterling being the amount of revenue raised on the Indian population, of seventy or eighty millions, while the British population of twenty-one millions pays sixty millions of money to its government! It will scarcely be denied that the West India colonies contribute equally with England to this revenue; therefore it is impossible that they can sell their productions at the same price as a people whose taxes, in comparison to theirs, are as one to twenty." (*Journals of Assembly*, 1822.)

The quantity of sugar annually consumed in the United Kingdom is estimated at one hundred and seventy thousand tons.

*Note* LI.—p. 364.

It must be the abuse, rather than the abstract institution of slavery which, in these latter days, has excited such rancorous abhorrence of those who unfortunately possess the servile race.

It still dwells, perhaps, in the recollection of Europe that the Greek empire was enslaved by the Moslems, and that as late as the year 1353, a naked crowd of Christians of both sexes, and every age, of priests and monks, of matrons and virgins, was exposed in the public market of Constantinople, where the whip was used to quicken the charity of redemption, and the indignant Greeks again deplored the fate of their brethren who were led away to the worst evils of temporal, and spiritual bondage. The negroes, on the other hand, who have been brought to Christian isles, have exchanged a barbarous and bloody bondage, probably a death of human sacrifice, for that mild servitude which could alone instil into their savage minds the arts of industry, and the mild religion of the gospel.

*Note* LII.—p. 365.

The name of Mr. Brougham is almost execrated in the colonies: yet he is believed by those who know him, to be "a most sincere and benevolent being. As a public man, he is sometimes betrayed into acrimony: but it is when he is thwarted by mean expedients, or teased by petty, grovelling exceptions; and who would fetter by precise rules the generous impulse of nature, or bind a noble enthusiasm to its good behaviour?"

*Note* LIII.—p. 369.

"Mr. Grignon, from the committee appointed to inquire what steps are necessary to be taken in consequence of the information received from the agent of this island, of proceedings adopted by the house of commons and his majesty's ministers, in respect to slavery in the British colonies in the West Indies, reported as follows:—

"Mr. Speaker,

"Your committee, appointed to inquire into, and report to the house what steps are necessary to be taken in consequence of information received from the agent of this island, of proceedings adopted by the house of commons and his majesty's ministers, in respect to slavery in the British colonies in the West Indies, report that on the 15th May last, a motion was brought forward in the house of commons by Mr. Buxton, *videlicet*, 'that the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion, and that it ought to be abolished gradually throughout the British colonies, in such a

manner, as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned.

" That Mr. Canning, one of his majesty's secretaries of state, proposed an amendment, which was afterwards adopted as the resolutions of the house, *nem. con.*, *videlicet*:

" ' That it is expedient to adopt effectual and decisive measures for meliorating the condition of the slave-population in his majesty's colonies:

" ' That through a determined and persevering, but at the same time judicious and temperate, enforcement of such measures, this house looks forward to progressive improvements in the character of the slave-population, such as may prepare them for a participation in those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his majesty's subjects:

" ' That this house is anxious for the accomplishment of this purpose at the earliest period that shall be compatible with the well-being of the slaves themselves, with the safety of the colonies, and with a fair and equitable consideration of the interests of private property.'

" That your committee observe with surprise and regret that his majesty's ministers have, by the above resolutions, and from declarations made by the colonial minister to our agent, sanctioned the principles laid down by our enemies in the mother country, and pledged themselves to adopt such measures as shall tend ultimately to the final extinction of slavery in the British colonies, without at the same time entering into any understanding or pledge to compensate the holders of such property for the losses they may thereby sustain.

" The committee further find, by a letter from the agent, dated the 8th July last, that instructions have been sent out to the governors of the several British colonies, grounded upon the above resolutions of the house of commons: That, although such instructions have not officially been laid before the house of assembly of this island, the committee learn from the agent's letters, and other channels of communication, that they contemplate a very material change in the existing laws of this colony, and are accompanied by a threat, that if the colonial legislature do not adopt them, the interference of the British parliament will be called for."

In speaking on " the West India question," Mr. Canning declared that, " to compare the difficulties which accompany it to

those of any other question which has ever occupied the attention of parliament, would be to draw but a faint and feeble picture of those difficulties; they are, indeed, apparent to the most casual observation: but he who has to probe, and prove them, for the purpose of applying a remedy, beholds them thickening around him at every step, and leaving him frequently nothing but a choice of evils."—Yet every half-witted bigot of "The African Institution" thinks himself capable of solving a difficulty which the most eminent statesman of the present age scarcely ventured to approach!

*Note* LIV.—p. 370.

"The weekly rations at present issued in Jamaica consist of—2 lbs. salt beef, 2 lbs. fresh beef, $2\frac{1}{7}$ lbs. of pork, 7 lbs. of flour, $1\frac{3}{4}$ of a pint of rum. And the commissioned officers, in lieu of rations in kind, receive the following allowances in money, viz.:—The officer, 1*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*; his wife, 16*s.* 3*d.*; children under seventeen years, 8*s.* 4*d.* The weekly rations, issued in the windward and leeward islands, consist of—2 lbs. salt beef, 2 lbs. fresh beef, 2 lb. $11\frac{3}{4}$ oz. of salt pork, 7 lbs. of bread, $1\frac{1}{8}$ quart rum, 2 lbs. rice, 9 oz. sugar, 5 oz. cocoa. The commissioned officers do not receive any pecuniary allowance, as in Jamaica, but each officer receives a ration of provisions in kind, and rations also are issued to the wives and families of officers in kind, viz.:—For his wife, $\frac{1}{2}$ a ration; child above seven years of age, $\frac{1}{3}$ ditto; ditto under seven years, $\frac{1}{4}$ ditto!

*Note* LV.—p. 371.

The creed of Pius IV. declares that baptism "sine sacrilegio reiterari non potest:" and, though we are not bound by the Roman faith, it is to be deplored that the peculiar circumstances in which the great body of the people here is placed, has rendered it often necessary to baptise them more than once, that they might have the necessary certificates to produce. The Romanists, in the French and Spanish colonies, manage these things better:—their civil and spiritual institutions amalgamate more readily.

I cannot help expressing, rather out of place, the pleasure and instruction I have lately received from the perusal of a volume written by a Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, the Rev.

Mr. Allwood, entitled " Brief Remarks on the Declaration of the Catholic Bishops, the Vicars Apostolic and their coadjutors in Great Britain :" the work of a critic, a scholar, and, what is most uncommon, a rational advocate of the Protestant religion.

*Note* LVI.—p. 387.

Although it was promised that the expense of the new ecclesiastical establishment should be borne by the British government, this colonial law imposed a tax of more than three thousand pounds for copying and *re-copying* the old parish registers; entailing also an annual charge for continuing such transcripts, and paying the salary of a registrar.

With respect to what I have already observed in the text, in the case of the unfortunate curate, at the bottom of page 387, I would add, that it would have been well if the power with which the country so inconsiderately invested the office of its Bishop had been confined in its operation and consequences within the island: but the clergy have unfortunately found it otherwise—their prospects, and even those of their children, have been sacrificed to an arbitrary feeling, and even the privilege of carrying an appeal to the foot of the throne has been denied them. Upon his arrival, the first Bishop of Jamaica, who was accompanied by six clergymen, found the livings and curacies occupied chiefly by Creoles, but some of them by British clergymen: and, looking forward to the possession of the patronage, his avowed principle was that no good could be expected from his mission until " the old clergy (that is, those who owed their appointments to the Duke of Manchester) were exterminated." The climate did much to effect his purpose—but prejudice and oppression did more. The Governor, although still holding the patronage, was bereft of the discretionary power of granting leave of absence on emergent occasions of ill-health or private business; and the lives or fortunes of those who had been longest in the active discharge of their duties here, were sported with or destroyed by their unreasonable detention. The consequence has been that at no period within the last thirty years has the island been so destitute of regularly-ordained clergymen, as at the present moment—for none would venture to a country where, besides the natural disadvantages of climate, they have to encounter a partial and arbitrary system of ecclesiastical government, whose irregularity

is in so many respects degrading to the profession, and injurious to the credit of the church.

*Note* LVII.—p. 389.

Arithmetic is an excellent touchstone to try the assertions of these people by. They affected great indignation at the charge of extorting money from the slaves, until, in the last session of the Assembly, they were summoned to attend, and compelled to answer certain questions, which convicted them, on their own reluctant testimony, of draining the almost incredible sum of, at least, seven thousand pounds annually from the pockets of the lower orders—the slaves principally.

*Note* LVIII.—p. 397.

Even in its present shipwreck, the pernicious influence of party has separated, or broken, the few remaining links of that chain which bound, in one common cause, the interests of the sinking island. The seeds of discord have been introduced into the Government—the firm supporters of the late successful administration have been dissevered—and the friends of the Duke of Manchester are now dispersed. The country has to lament the loss of one of its brightest ornaments in the departure of Mr. Rennalls; and the valuable services of its most eminent lawyer, an Attorney-General who could advise with prudence and execute with zeal, are withdrawn in the person of Mr. Burge.

## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON THE HISTORY OF HONDURAS.

HISTORIANS the most minute must still leave much to be desired by the curious, or interested, reader: and the history of a long-neglected colony, which has been left so imperfect in the foregoing pages, has suffered especially from the effects of wars, hurricanes, shipwreck, and fire. Its records were partly destroyed in the Spanish invasions of 1754 and 1779; they were scattered by the hurricane of 1787; many were lost in the wreck of the triumvirate in 1790; and but few escaped the fire of the following year. I have lately been favoured, however, with some authentic notes upon the subject at the hands of two highly respectable and well-informed inhabitants of Honduras, George Westby and Thomas Pickstock, Esquires; and as they further illustrate the condition of a colony which promises, in the hands of the American States, or under the auspices of Great Britain, to rise into that repute and importance from which the elder colonies are falling fast, I cannot withhold from my readers the information which I now possess. With such guides, with the materials which they have provided, and with some knowledge of the way, I shall, therefore, attempt a further description of Honduras; and while I assume the liberty of judgment, I shall not be unmindful of the duties of gratitude.

Active, enterprising, and condensed as are the inhabitants of Honduras within a small territory, it is not, perhaps, surprising that their settlement should just now shine with a rising splendour amidst the expiring colonies attached to the British dominion in the west. The industry of the settlers, the extraordinary simplicity of their form of government, the patriotic spirit of a most respectable magistracy, the unusual indulgences of which their slaves have rendered themselves worthy, and the cruel persecution through which they have struggled to their present independence, still pertinaciously clinging to their land and laws, might furnish materials for an ample history. The new relations which have been lately formed with Central America have opened extensive speculations, and vast resources in the back country and around the settlement of Belize, which

the selfish imbecility of the Spanish monarch, whose empire has been lost in the ambition of universal dominion, can now no longer withhold. It is but within the last few months that the town of Peten, situated two hundred and sixty miles west of Belize, at the head of its magnificent river, has been exposed to speculation, or even to our acquaintance. A road is now open, and a lively intercourse with the British merchants has arisen there. Fleets of Indian pit-pans repair almost weekly to Belize, and return loaded with articles of British manufacture. Peten, formerly the capital of the Itzaex Indians, was one of the last conquests of the Spaniards, in the year 1697. It stands on an island in the centre of the extensive fresh-water lake Itza, in lat. 16° N., long. 91° 16′ W. Within fifty miles of it the enterprising spirit of the British settler has already extended the search for mahogany, and what may not be expected from a people so industrious, so judicious, and so persevering! The Itza is twenty-six leagues in circumference, and its pure waters, to the depth of thirty fathoms, produce the most excellent fish. The islands of Lepet, Galves, Lopez, Bixit, and Coju, lie scattered over its surface, and afford a delicious retreat to ten thousand inhabitants, who form part of the new republic of Central America, within the spiritual jurisdiction of the Mexican diocese of Yucatan. The fertile soil yields two harvests in the year, producing maize, chiapa pepper, balsam, vanilla, cotton, indigo, cocoa, cochineal, brazil wood, and the most exquisite fruits in wasteful abundance. Several navigable rivers flowing thence are lost in the great Pacific, and suggest an easy communication with the British limits. Within ten leagues of the shores of the Itza lake commences the ridge of the Alabaster mountains, on whose surface glitter in profusion the green, the brown, and the variegated jaspers, while the forests are filled with wild and monstrous beasts, the Equus Bisulcus, or Chinese horse, tigers, and lions, of a degenerate breed. Roads diverge in all directions from this favoured spot, and afford an easy communication with a free channel for British merchandise to San Antonio, to Chichanha, San Benito, Tabasco, and even Campeachy; while throughout the whole country the most stupendous timbers are abundant; the most valuable drugs, balsams, and aromatic plants, grow wild; and the achiote, amber, copal, dragon's blood, mastic, and almacigo, are everywhere to be gathered.

Such is the extraordinary country which the settlers at Hon-

duras have opened to the British enterprise, and now, for the first time, made us acquainted with. But over it a dangerous and enterprising rival hovers, and in the event of a war, most probably would seize it as his earliest prey. The value of a neglected colony becomes enhanced in an incalculable degree by the various channels which are thus open from it for the suffocated commerce of Great Britain; the manufacturing districts of the Empire are choked with unsaleable produce, or deserted by the starving operative, yet the value of millions might here find a ready sale, and an easy market. Fettered, however, by the most cruel restrictions, which were admitted, with culpable carelessness, into the various treaties with the Court of Madrid, the settlers of Honduras have never had an opportunity to put forth all their energies; they have been oppressed by an evil influence, and have still to contend against such difficulties as are totally unknown to all other classes of British subjects. In a country, then, in which the richest productions of the earth are nowhere more abundant, yet nowhere so neglected, they have been forbidden to take that which decays in uselessness upon the soil, or lies unheeded by the ignorant and idle occupiers of the land. It will hardly be credited, that, when the privilege of cutting mahogany, as well as logwood, from a territory where it was a weed, was forced from the reluctant monarch of Spain, in the year 1783, the ministers of George III. subscribed a condition which was meant to root out the colony; for it prohibited the inhabitants from adopting any form of jurisprudence, or even of temporary executive justice amongst themselves, until a constitution should be settled, and approved, by the incompatible interests of the two contending crowns. The characteristic treachery of Spain was thus disregarded, although so palpably evident in placing restraints upon British industry within a country which had been ceded by a former treaty; and she was now allowed to sap the foundation of a rising colony, which she could not expel, by drawing it into a situation where it could not long exist. But having established the destructive article, the cautious policy of Spain caused her to pause while the stratagem should take effect; and a superintendent was despatched by the Governor of Jamaica, under royal instructions, to carry the pernicious decree into immediate effect. Such was the origin of the *dependence* which Honduras claims upon Jamaica: for, from that time, all its superintendents have received their appointments

direct from this island, although nominated in London. Colonel Despard was this second superintendent of Honduras. Previous to his appointment, Sir William Burnaby, who was commander-in-Chief on the Jamaica station, had been sent with a similar title to see that the crown of Spain fulfilled the treaty of 1763, and that the settlers were put in full possession of their lands and rights. In earlier times, two Commissioners had been appointed to the government of Honduras, with the isles of Rattan and Bonacco; while the settlements on the Belize, the New River, and Rio Hondo, were directed by their own magistrates.

We are solicitous to believe that Colonel Despard, disgraceful as was his end, conducted himself in his little government as a man of the most liberal and upright principle; guarding with a vigilant eye the interests of that crown which he was eventually hanged for endeavouring to overthrow, and expending, from his private purse, considerable sums of money to promote the welfare, or comfort, of his people. His situation was certainly one of extreme difficulty and embarrassment; for the espionnage exercised over him by a Spanish officer, whom he was obliged to admit twice a year to examine the Settlement, was vexatious and degrading. To maintain something like order, a body of nine magistrates was still elected by the inhabitants, and when they coalesced, in the year 1787, with the settlers who were compelled to evacuate the Mosquito shore, a formal demand was instantly made by the Spanish Commissary that this, and all other species of police, should be finally abolished; hoping thereby to throw the crowded colony into inextricable confusion. The hostile authorities around them congratulated themselves on the inevitable destruction of the hated settlement; and their anxious wishes would have been realised, had not the people dared to assert the rights of Britons, by appealing to their Superintendent, who, with a bold and steady hand, saved them from the snare which Spanish perfidy had spread for them. Pressed on one hand by the urgency of the Commissary, and urged at the same time by his duty to his Sovereign to fulfil the ignominious provisions of the treaty into which he had been blindly led, while he beheld around him the distress, the instant ruin of his colony, which could not exist without the administration of something like justice, Colonel Despard adopted a line of conduct which, whatever might have been the opinion of the British Cabinet, preserved Honduras to its Crown. He promulgated

with force and effect an excellent system of temporary police, and eventually was the means of procuring a formal power authorising the violation of the perfidious treaty. Before that power could be exerted, however, a time-serving spirit of domestic opposition compelled him once more to annul his judiciary system, and to appeal again to the king, who superseded him in the government, and restored the ancient constitution as it had been modelled by Sir William Burnaby. Thus did Secretary Grenville, with a bold hand, remedy the evil which the crafty policy of Spain had induced him to inflict, and he confirmed, in spite of all remonstrance from the baffled Court of Madrid, that legislative and judicial system which was best adapted to the constitution of the colony, having been its earliest and most natural government. From that time (1790) it was governed by its own magistrates, until the year 1795, when, at the instance of the inhabitants, Lord Balcarres was induced to send Colonel Barrow from Jamaica with two Commissions,—one as Civil Governor, and the other "to command his Majesty's subjects armed, or to be armed." From that period Belize has never been without a resident Superintendent, holding similar commissions from this island, upon which it is no further dependent.

Such have been a few of the civil disabilities under which the settlers of Honduras laboured: the military movements of the Spaniards against the envied colony have been still formidable: and it is only extraordinary that a small body of men, depending alone upon their own industry and resources, should have been able to maintain its position amidst such an host of enemies, or to raise itself into further notice by now opening a new and unlooked-for commerce to the necessities of the parent state. ' The climate is, undoubtedly, bad, though the deaths are proportionably less frequent than in many parishes within the Bills of Mortality;—for a continual sea-breeze purifies or disperses the noxious miasmata of a vast swamp around the town. Where they open to the ocean, the banks of both the Sibun and the Belize are low and marshy, but the land gradually rises into a bold and lofty country, interspersed with rivers and lagoons, and covered with the thickest forests, where the foot of man has seldom trod. The soil is rich and deep, capable of producing, in the utmost perfection, every species of European vegetable or fruit, as well as those peculiar to the tropic: and were British industry or speculation allowed its full scope there, the extraor-

dinary facilities of water-carriage might be improved to an extent hardly known elsewhere.

The commerce of the colony, poor and neglected as it is, still employs sixteen thousand tons of British shipping: the value of its exports to Great Britain in the year 1826, were little less than half a million, sterling money; and the imports thence exceeded it; while an indirect channel for our own manufactures is kept open between Belize, and the neighbouring ports of Omoa, Truxillo, and the Gulph of Dolce. But a negligence, extraordinary in British statesmen, renders that trade at present but a forced one, maintained by great exertion to preserve a colony which would otherwise be extinguished by the competition of St. Domingo, and the superiority which that island possesses in the nature of its mahogany. Logwood was originally the only article of commerce which Yucatan maintained; and about the reign of the first Charles, that dye was so valuable, that it was the principal cause of attaching to the West Indies that idea of wealth which the East still derives from the cultivation of the tea-plant. The markets of Europe were, however, soon overstocked; the wood declined in value, and the attention of the Honduras-bay men was turned to mahogany, which was equally abundant, and has ever since been almost their only article of export.

Were it the object, as it undoubtedly is the policy, of Great Britain, to fix her interest, and plant her standard, firmly in a part of America which already offers many advantages, and which, in case of a trans-Atlantic war, would be found to possess some of vital importance to her commerce, she would not so long have neglected a colony which, if rendered subject to a rival power, would be improved to her serious and irreparable injury. The proximity of the important cities and towns of Yucatan, Guatimala, and Leon, points out Honduras as a great commercial station; and were the settlers possessed of the means of enlarging the communication which they have already opened with Peten, the spirit of enterprise would soon be wonderfully repaid.

As at present subsisting, the legislative system of Honduras is one of almost primitive simplicity; and under the discreet management of Major-General Codd, the utmost harmony prevails throughout the colony. Every British law is in force there, provided there be no local enactment especially to take its

place: but the principal inhabitants meet three times in every year to frame such as may be necessary, to impose taxes, and transact the various business of the public. The discussions usually close with the first day, and the resolutions are submitted to the approval of the superintendent. Nor was it till the year 1819, that it was judged expedient to institute a criminal court; for so great was the respect shown to the magisterial authority, by men who were as well regulated in their passions, as honest and industrious in their habits, that it was deemed scarcely worth while to increase the wheels of a machine which went so smoothly and correctly by the simplest movement.. The judges in this supreme court, which was instituted by letters-patent, are nominated by the crown; they hold their assizes three times in the year; and the king's advocate, also appointed by the crown, prosecutes all suits before them. The constitution of the civil or grand court it would be impossible to improve: the magistrates preside—no lawyers are admitted—each party prefers his own suit—every thing is rendered simple and easy; the establishment of debt is speedy, and the whole expense of carrying a suit through the forms of court seldom exceeds five pounds. The magistrates are annually elected from amongst the principal inhabitants; their service, as well as that of the coroner, is gratuitous; they are the counsellors of the Governor, —the protectors of the public peace,—the judges of the lower courts; they form a court of ordinary,—are the guardians of orphans, and, in fact, execute the usual duties of a chancellor. They also manage the public funds, and control the treasurer. The financial department is as simple as the rest; for the money necessary to defray the public expenses is raised by permanent duties on rum, sugar, tea, wine, &c., imported by British subjects; while a tonnage duty extends, in a wider circle, to all articles imported by foreigners. Thus is the colony enabled to pay its officers, to maintain a very respectable church establishment, instituted in the year 1777, with a free-school and hospital, and to bestow pensions on the poor; while a table of the disbursements and an account of the funds are daily displayed before the public eye. A census is taken every three years, by the keeper of the records, an officer also appointed by the crown, whose important office it is to act as clerk and recorder to the Governor in council. The church patronage is in the hands of those who support it with their money; the clergyman, who is

usually, also, the garrison chaplain, is appointed by the magistrates on behalf of the public, and if the emoluments be not large, the situation is independent and respectable. Public medical officers attend all punishments and inquests, the hospital, the gaol, and the paupers daily, and furnish all medicines required. The public treasurer is appointed by the crown, with a salary of one thousand pounds per annum, paid out of the colonial funds. The militia was established in the year 1786, and is about one thousand strong, including a brigade of artillery. In 1817, the title of "The Prince Regent's Royal Honduras Militia" was conferred upon this deserving little army, and it is usually strengthened by a detachment of regulars, which forms the established garrison of Belize.

The principal property of the settlers consists of negroes and cattle, the latter required to convey the timber from the distant forests to the water's edge, the former employed in cutting it; and some breeding farms recently established, have rewarded the enterprising industry of their owners. Previous to the year 1670, there were no negroes in the colony, but the logwood was cut and prepared, solely by the labour of about seventeen hundred Europeans: nor was it till forty-eight years afterwards that Africans were introduced in any numbers from Bermuda and Jamaica. Upon the various occasions on which I have had occasion to introduce the subject of slavery into the foregoing pages, experience has long since taught me that all the truth and reasoning is on the unpopular, all the falsehood and assertion on the popular side of the question; and in describing the extraordinary state of the *slaves* in Honduras, I feel that it will be quite impossible to do justice either to them, or to those who have the management of them, without abolishing that odious, and, in the present case, that empty title. The serfs of ancient Europe were never admitted to an equal participation in the fruits of their toil, or to that friendly and familiar intercourse which raises the negro population of Honduras at least to a level with the most favoured labouring classes in any part of Europe. The British husbandman, whose wages can seldom supply him with a meal of animal food, and who usually ends his days in the squalid misery of a parish workhouse, may envy his sable brother here, whose weekly allowance is ten pounds of flour, six pounds of Irish pork, with a proportion of rum and tobacco, besides every article of clothing, medical assistance when re-

quired, and a certain provision for the decline of life. No whips are here necessary to urge the negro to his duty,—no regular or stated punishments are awarded to delinquency; no work-houses are required—but a slave-court protects the innocent, and punishes the guilty; the negro looks up to his master as his friend and protector; and while he hears of the misery which is said to oppress his colour in the West Indies, he is grateful to his own good fortune which has placed him in Honduras. A knife, a sword, and a gun, supply his chief wants; his clean appearance, his healthy look, and cheerful countenance, establish the fact of kind treatment; and his master feels no fear in being for weeks immured in the depth of trackless forests, surrounded by his armed *slaves*, and far away from all his other friends. To preserve the negroes free from that contamination which has seduced so many thousands to their destruction in the larger British colonies, all foreign or suspected labourers are carefully excluded, and a heavy penalty attaches to the employment of a Charaib, or a French, or a Spanish free negro.

With regard to the population around the British limits, it remains to be observed, that the Indians there differ essentially from those on the Mosquito shore, who are now degenerated into a lazy, dirty, and a worthless race. They are a copper-coloured, timid people, wandering over an immense extent of country, with the most patriarchal simplicity and indifference; flying from the sight of a stranger, especially from an European, or a negro; and forming temporary settlements wherever nature appears most bountiful to their rude necessities. Their dread of fevers, or contagion, is so great, that they will touch nothing which has been handled by a stranger; and if one of them is sick, they place within his reach such provisions as he may want, and remove to some distant part of the country, never returning to the same spot unless the invalid recovers. Their habits of life have thus protected them from all contact or mixture with any other tribes or people; and they have preserved the Indian purity of their race, from the days when Columbus first discovered their interesting shores.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

## ERRATA IN THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE ANNALS OF JAMAICA.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Page viii | line | 6 | *for* | national | *read* | rational |
| xv | | 17 | „ | or | „ | and |
| 8 | | 14 | „ | professes | „ | possesses |
| 10 | | 21 | „ | polite | „ | politic |
| 26 | | 8 | „ | D'Onley's | „ | D'Oyley's |
| 35 | | 30 | „ | seas | „ | sea |
| 39 | | 8 | „ | to | „ | in |
| 65 | | 17 | „ | the | „ | they |
| 102 | | 3 | *dele* | all | | |
| 104 | | 2 | *for* | eras | „ | æras |
| 114 | | 11 | „ | adventuring | „ | venturing |
| 137 | | 27 | „ | Seville Nuevo | „ | Sevilla Nueva |
| 138 | | 1 | „ | Jean d'Esquibel | „ | Juan d'Esquimel |
| 167 | | 15 | „ | river | „ | riven |
| 177 | | 10 | „ | opopanax | „ | opoponax |
| 196 | | 25 | „ | but | „ | while |
| 203 | | 21 | „ | and his own many | „ | many of his own |
| 212 | | 20 | „ | hitherto | „ | at first |
| 216 | | 17 | *dele* | past | | |
| 225 | | 15 | *for* | indentured | „ | indented |
| 234 | | 3 | „ | conbated | „ | contributed |
| 259 | | 16 | „ | Sir Thomas | „ | Sir Charles |
| 275 | | 28 | „ | Liguania | „ | Liguanea |
| 277 | | 23 | „ | indentured | „ | indented |
| 282 | | 28 | „ | Lord | „ | Lords |
| 287 | | 15 | „ | ministers | „ | members |
| 293 | | 6 | „ | of | „ | from |
| 309 | | 21 | „ | public and | „ | and public |
| 310 | | 13 | „ | pebate | „ | debate |
| 322 | | 21 | „ | Abbey | „ | Alley |
| 334 | | 5 | „ | oppression | „ | opposition |
| 339 | | 21 | *dele* | and | | |
| 339 | | 30 | „ | the | | |
| 344 | | 19 | *for* | address | „ | statement |
| 346 | | 10 | „ | singular | „ | singularly |
| 355 | | 3 | „ | repeated | „ | repealed |
| 357 | | 24 | „ | governed now | „ | now governed |
| 357 | | 28 | „ | rejected | „ | rejecting |
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| 385 | | 30 | „ | discovery | „ | discovering |
| 399 | | 17 | „ | Mili | „ | Mile |
| 410 | | 35 | „ | was | „ | were |
| 432 | | 10 | „ | commissions | „ | commissioners |
| 440 | | 24 | „ | transmitten | „ | transmitted |
| 447 | | 34 | „ | Ojoda | „ | Ojeda |
| 454 | | 19 | „ | diminsions | „ | dimensions |
| 462 | | 3 | „ | Comester | „ | Comestor |
| 465 | | 18 | „ | in the book | „ | in the 14th book |
| 473 | | 28 | „ | banners | „ | banner |
| 480 | | 10 | „ | had | „ | have |
| 481 | | 30 | „ | these | „ | the |
| 483 | | 26 | „ | hostilities | „ | hostility |
| 528 | | 14 | „ | him | „ | himself |
| 530 | | 35 | „ | mines | „ | miners |
| 537 | | 25 | „ | their | „ | the |
| 539 | | 29 | „ | Charles I. | „ | Charles II. |
| 557 | | 22 | „ | have been imported | „ | have been first imported |
| 558 | | 5 | „ | to the first | „ | to be the first |
| 559 | | 29 | „ | Cabel | „ | Caleb |
| 567 | | 18 | „ | surplus | „ | surplice |
| 568 | | 24 | „ | relates | „ | relate |
| 601 | | 16 | „ | apophthayms | „ | apophthegms |

The distance of the Author from the press will be a sufficient apology for a numerous list of Errata;—and he only laments that the unequivocal testimony of so many of his own errors will still remain to prove the perfect innocence of the Printer.

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